MORGAN AND MORECAMBE OFFSHORE WIND FARMS: TRANSMISSION ASSETS

Annex 2.6 to Applicants' Response to Deadline 3 submissions from Statutory Consultees and other organisation: Natural England (REP3-90 - REP3-95, AS-078)

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1.1 Introduction

1.1.1.1 Following Deadline 3, Morgan Offshore Wind Limited ('Morgan OWL') and Morecambe Offshore Windfarm Limited ('Morecambe OWL'), (together, 'the Applicants') have reviewed each of the submissions received from stakeholders who registered as Interested parties (IPs) in the Examination.

1.1.1.2 Details of the Applicants' response to Natural England's submissions (REP3-90, REP3-91, REP3-92, REP3-93, REP3-94 and REP3-95) received at Deadline 3 as set out in this annex.

2 Applicants' Response to Written Representations

2.1 Natural England REP3-090 – Natural England's Response at Deadline 3

Table 2-1: REP3-090 – Natural England's Response at Deadline 3

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
REP3-090 090.1	**1. Deadline 3 Submissions** Natural England have submitted the following documents at Deadline 3: • EN020028 514882 Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Transmission Assets - Appendix K3 - Natural England's Risk and Issues Log Deadline 3; • EN020028 514882 Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Transmission Assets - Appendix L3 - Natural England's comments on Examining Authority's written questions (ExQ1) [PD-008]; • EN020028 514882 Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Transmission Assets - Appendix C3 – Natural England's comments on Benthic and Subtidal Ecology Deadline 3; and • EN020028 514882 Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Transmission Assets – Appendix G3 – Natural England's comments on Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation Deadline 3	The Applicants note this response.
REP3-090 090.2	**2. Submission of Updated Environmental Statement Chapters** In REP2-001 the Applicant outlined the following approach to finalising chapters: 'Prior to the end of examination and once the Commitment Register is finalised, any necessary updates will be made to the relevant Environmental Statement chapters, likely at Deadline 6'. Natural England would like to raise that should all chapters only be updated at Deadline 6 (22nd October), this would only allow a week before Deadline 7, and the close of Examination (29th October), to review the changes in the chapters and provide a response. In our responses in the Risk and Issues Log we highlight issues we think can be readily resolved by updating certain chapters now. We would therefore encourage the Applicant to submit updated versions of those chapters before Deadline 6, to allow adequate time to review changes and prevent all updated chapters being submitted at the same deadline.	The Applicants note Natural England's comment and as agreed will be updating the relevant Environmental Statement chapters at Deadline 5 where necessary.
REP3-090 090.3	**3. Updates to the Risk and Issues Log at Deadline 3** At Deadline 2 the Applicant submitted multiple documents requiring Natural England's review. Annex 1 lists the documents which have been reviewed by Natural England and where comments can be found.	The Applicants note this response.
REP3-090 090.4	**4. Onshore Ornithology Advice** Natural England acknowledges the documents submitted into Examination regarding onshore ornithology issues. We would like to highlight that these issues have been explored through our Discretionary Advice Service and discussed on a site visit and teams meeting. We have included some initial comments on resolved matters in response to the submitted documents in the relevant Examiner's Questions and captured these in the Risk and Issues Log where appropriate. Due to unforeseen circumstances, unfortunately we are not able to provide advice on all the onshore ornithology information submitted by the Applicant at Deadline 2. Our outstanding concerns relate to the impacts on passage waterbirds at the landfall and the proposed management at Fairhaven saltmarsh, and the measures proposed to address the loss of Functionally Linked Land affected by the onshore cable route. We are working to progress this advice and will submit it as soon as possible after Deadline 3, in the hope that this will be accepted into the Examination at the Examiner's discretion. We will also provide the advice directly to the Applicant to help progress these issues.	The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's position regarding the unresolved onshore and intertidal ornithology matters and remain committed to working collaboratively with Natural England to resolve these matters. As part of this, the Applicants met with Natural England on 25/07/2025 to discuss possible commitments to resolve Natural England's concerns which are found within the Outline Ecological Management Plan (J6/F04).

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
REP3-090 090.5	**5. Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation** Natural England has provided comments and updates on Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation issues in the Risk and Issues Log submitted at Deadline 3 (Appendix K3). In Appendix G3 we provide additional clarification and reiterate our advice on the outstanding issues in the Risk and Issues Log, however we wish to highlight that our advice in our Relevant Representations [RR-1601] on these matters has not changed.	The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's position regarding the unresolved onshore ecology and nature conservation matters and remain committed to working collaboratively with Natural England to resolve these matters. This includes the preparation of a specific Sand Lizard Mitigation Plan as part of the Outline Ecological Management Plan (J6/F04), and an updated National Vegetation Classification Survey (NVC) of the Lytham St Anne's Dunes SSSI, the results of which will be shared with Natural England in due course and submitted at Deadline 5.

3 Applicants' Response to Written Representations

3.1 Natural England REP3-092 – Appendix C3 to Natural England's Deadline 3 Submission

Table 3-1: REP3-092 –Appendix C3 to Natural England's Deadline 3 Submission

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
Natural England's Advice On: Benthic and Subtidal Ecology – Outline CSIP		
REP3-092 092.1	Natural England reiterate our Relevant Representations [RR-1601] Annex C advice points C14, C22, and C45 which requires the Applicant to quantify and evaluate the worst-case impacts from UXO clearance within and outside the Fylde MCZ. This evaluation should provide evidence to justify the current temporary characterisation of impacts.	As outlined in the Applicants' response to RR-1601 (B1601.B.14; PDA-016) the desk-based review undertaken indicates that there are no known UXOs recorded within the overlapping area of the Fylde MCZ and the Offshore Order Limits. The Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) details that, based on current information, there is only one known buried UXO within the Offshore Order Limits and this is outside the boundary of the Fylde MCZ. However, a precautionary approach has been adopted to the assessment which assumes that up to four UXOs may require clearance within the MCZ. The clearance of up to four UXOs within the Fylde MCZ was assessed in paragraph 1.8.2.22 of the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) and in section 2.11.2 of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045). Data in the public domain was used to determine likely crater size for the most likely (common) maximum UXO size of 130 kg with a diameter of 12.61 m and a depth of circa 3 m (Ordtek, 2018). Further data was also available for larger UXO up to 700 kg (Equinor, 2022). Data relating to the larger UXO indicates that crater sizes for 700 kg ordinance may be up to 5 m in depth (21 m in diameter), although observations of craters following high order UXO clearance in areas of sandy gravel, similar to those found in the study area, were typically half of this predicted diameter and less than 1.5 m in depth (Ordtek, 2018). Therefore, individual craters generated for high order clearance for a maximum 907 kg UXO in an area characterised by active sediment transport would not give rise to significant impacts on physical processes. Although craters may initially infill with the most mobile, finest, sediment the baseline sediment processes would continue restoring the sediment transport regime and seabed characteristics. Based on a diameter of 12.61m, the area impacted by one UXO clearance is 124.9m^2. The MDS for UXO removal is for clearance of up to 25 UXOs, 22 within the Morgan Offshore Export Cable Corridor and 3 within Morecambe Offshore Export Cable Corridor. UXO clearance is likely to include a range of UXO sizes with the net explosive quantity (NEQ) ranging between 25 kg to 907 kg with 130 kg being the most likely. Based on an area impact of 124.9m^2 per UXO clearance, the MDS for UXO clearance within the MCZ is for a maximum of 4 UXOs (499.6m^2), and outwith the MCZ is for a maximum of 21 UXOs (2,622.9m^2). These values are not quantified within the Stage 1 MCZ Assessment, or the Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology chapter, as they form part of the temporary habitat disturbance and are likely to be within the footprint of the sandwave clearance activities. In line with the Joint Position statement on unexploded ordnance clearance published on 21 January 2025, the Applicants have committed to the use of low order techniques only as the primary mitigation measure for clearance (Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments Register (APP-037), CoT64). The Applicants are not seeking the licencing of high order UXO clearance within the Transmission Assets DCO and agree that the use of high order detonation would be subject to a separate Marine Licence. Low order clearance is a new technique which has been successfully applied at the Moray West Offshore Windfarm, where 81 UXO ranging from 14 kg to 879 kg were all cleared using this technique (Ocean Winds, 2024). This example demonstrates the success of low order detonation techniques such as deflagration and demonstrates that it is highly likely the majority, if not all, of the UXO identified could be cleared using low-order clearance methods with resulting crater sizes significantly smaller than those cited here. The UXO clearance path will be within the width of seabed disturbance from the pre-lay grapnel run (PLGR) and/ or boulder removal clearance corridor, which will be 20 m wide centred on each cable, or up to 60 m wide where sandwave clearance is undertaken for Morgan cables or 48 m where sandwave clearance is undertaken for Morecambe cables. Based on desktop data available relating to crater sizes, any craters generated will also be within the areas of disturbance assumed for sandwave clearance, PLGR and/ or boulder clearance, therefore the Applicants would not expect low order UXO clearance to add to the existing disturbance footprint. The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) and Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical processes (APP-042), for submission at Deadline 5 to include all additional

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
		clarifications/justifications provided in submissions at previous deadlines to address Natural England's comments relating to UXO clearance.
REP3-092 092.2	Natural England welcomes the use of Control Flow Excavator for cable installation to ensure retention of sediment within the local sediment cells, but that would not be the case with the other proposed installation tools for sandwave clearance. Therefore, the mitigation measures should go further to consider Natural England's advice as detailed in RR-1601 Annex C point C31. And R&I Log (Appendix K) points B6, B10, B16, C8, C13, C14, and C15.	The Applicants can confirm that within the Fylde MCZ, the Control Flow Excavator will be the only method used for sandwave clearance. The Applicants will update the Outline cable specification and installation plan (REP2-022), Project Description (REP2-008) and the Dredging and disposal - site characterisation plan (APP-227) at Deadline 5 to remove reference to 'dredging' as a sandwave clearance method in the Fylde MCZ.
Natural England's Advice On: Benthic and Subtidal Ecology – Project Description		
REP3-092 092.3	Natural England requires assurance that the 20 m width quoted within Table 3.6 is a realistic maximum design scenario for seabed disturbance.	As set out in Table 3.6 of the Project Description (REP2-008), the maximum design scenario for the trench within which an offshore export cable is installed is 3 m centred on the cable (i.e. up to 1.5m either side of the cable). The cable installation tools available for subsea cable installation range in size to a maximum of approximately 10 m wide (e.g. SMD's CBT1100 installation tool which is 7.5m wide (SMD, 2025a) and Prysmian HD3 installation tool which is 6.5m wide (Prysmian, 2005)), which would also be centred on the cable (i.e. up to 5 m either side of the cable). Best practice for the offshore renewables industry is to clear the path of the cable installation tool up to 10 m either side of the cable route to ensure that the cable installation tool does not become fouled with contingency on the width of the cable installation tool i.e. 20 m centred on the cable. This is generally achieved using a pre-lay grapnel run tool, which uses a grapnel and chain hook arrangement to snag and catch debris along the cable route or pre-lay plough / boulder clearance plough such as the SMD multifunction pre-lay plough which is 12m wide (SMD 2025b) and Helix multi-function i-plough which is 10 to 16m wide (Helix Energy Solutions, 2025). Therefore, the Applicants are confident that the 20 m disturbance width for cable installation is appropriate and precautionary as a maximum design scenario. As noted in the Applicants' response to comment RI_J1 & J3 in Appendix K3 - Natural England's Risk and Issues Log Deadline 3 (REP3-094) and in response to Natural England response to question 7.1.4 in ExQ1 (S_D4_2.6), the Applicants have responded to this point in full in the Applicants' response to RR.1601.B.9 (PDA-016) and RR.1601.C.14 (PDA-017), but reorganised the response below to aid in explaining the Applicants position. • The MDS for pre-lay grapnel runs (PLGR) / boulder clearance does not include the areas where sandwave clearance has occurred as sandwave clearance would either remove the need for PLGR / boulder clearance, or those activities would occur within the disturbance footprint of sandwave clearance. This is because the sandwave clearance swathe is 60 m wide for Morgan cables and 48 m wide for Morecambe cables centred on each offshore export cable route, whilst the swathe for PLGR / boulder clearance is 20 m wide centred on each offshore export cable route. • In the event that sandwave clearance is not required and boulder clearance is required along 100% of offshore export cables, then this remains within the MDS assessed as the width of disturbance for boulder clearance is 20 m and so well within the width of disturbance assessed for sandwave clearance. • For the remaining 91% of the Morgan and Morecambe cables where sandwave clearance is not expected to be required, the MDS assumes repeat disturbance of the same 20 m wide swathe centred on each export cable's route due to boulder clearance (by plough or grab) (PLGR and UXO clearance (if required) as set out in section 3.12.3 of the Project Description chapter (REP2-008)). Where a high density of boulders is encountered, the expectation is that a boulder plough will be required to clear the installation corridor. Where medium and low densities of boulders are present, a sub-sea grab is expected to be employed. In either case, boulders will be side cast to the edge of the 20 m installation corridor. The Applicants would highlight that a new commitment has also been added to the updated Commitments Register submitted at Deadline 4 (F1.5.3/F05) as CoT134 which states that *"As part of the detailed design process, micro-siting of the offshore export cables within the offshore export cable corridors will be considered where successful burial could pose a challenge or where a higher risk of remedial works such as external cable protection may be required."*
REP3-092 092.4	Natural England is concerned that in the absence of an appropriately detailed CBRA that the MDS for cable protection, particularly within the Fylde MCZ, may not be realistic. We require further information as to how the MDS for rock protection, specifically within the Fylde MCZ, has been confidently determined.	The Applicants' position remains as outlined in response to comment RR.1601.43 on the location and design of cable protection (PDA-014). Details of cable protection material and volumes for the Transmission Assets are provided in sections 3.12.6 of Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description (REP2-008) with further details provided in

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
		the Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan (CSIP) (APP-220). These detail a Maximum Design Scenario (MDS) for: • up to 51 crossings (Table 3.8 in Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description (REP2-008)); • the location of crossings are shown in Volume 1, Annex 3.1: Offshore Crossing Schedule ((APP-025); • requirements for cable protection due to ground conditions (Table 3.7 in Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description (REP2-008)); and • Within the Fylde MCZ, there are up to 4 cable crossings (up to 4,000 m^2 of cable protection) and a 3% cable protection contingency for ground conditions (26,400 m^2 of cable protection) as detailed in section 7.2 and section 7.3 in the Outline CSIP (APP-220)). The use of cable protection for ground conditions, where required, will be further evaluated and considered post-consent in the CSIPs, following further post-consent and pre-construction surveys, secured as part of the Construction Method Statements. The Offshore Construction Method Statements are secured in the Draft DCO (AS-004) in: • Condition 18(1)(e) of Schedule 14 for the Morgan Offshore Wind Project: Transmission Assets; and • Condition 18(1)(e) of Schedule 15 for the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm: Transmission Assets. As outlined in Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical Processes (APP-042) and Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal ecology (APP-045), the physical process and benthic ecology assessments have been undertaken on the MDS as presented within Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description (REP2-008) with the assessment of the associated impacts for sediment transport pathways identified as being of negligible to minor adverse significance, which is not significant in EIA terms. The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical Processes (APP-042) Chapter to capture the related information contained within the outline CSIP (APP-220) and CBRA (APP-219) to address Natural England comments. This will be submitted at Deadline 5. As outlined in the Applicants' response to RR.1601.43 (PDA-014), the Applicants consider that a precautionary but realistic approach has been adopted for the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019). The approach assumes that all long-term habitat loss associated with cable protection for ground conditions may occur within either the subtidal mud or subtidal sand feature. As outlined in the Outline Offshore Cable Specification and Installation Plan (CSIP) (APP-220) as part of the detailed design process pre-construction survey data will be used to inform the final routing of the cable, along with any micro-siting requirements and areas where there is a higher risk of remedial works such as external cable protection. The Applicants would highlight that a new commitment has also been added to the updated Commitments Register submitted at Deadline 4 (F1.5.3/F05) as CoT134 which states that "*As part of the detailed design process, micro-siting of the offshore export cables within the offshore export cable corridors will be considered where successful burial could pose a challenge or where a higher risk of remedial works such as external cable protection may be required*." At this stage in the consenting process, however, the Applicants are unable to refine these assumptions further. Following detailed design post-consent, the exact compensation requirements may be refined, in consultation with stakeholders, which would then inform MEEB compensation figures if it is deemed to be required by the SoS. With regards to the cable protection required in the Fylde MCZ for the cable crossings, the Applicants provided a Stage 2 MCZ Assessment, including a without prejudice, in-principle Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) Plan, at Deadline 1 (REP1-059) which updated the MDS for long term habitat loss of each of the features to account for the cable crossings occurring only within the subtidal mud feature. The Applicants will update the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) for submission at Deadline 5 to include the update to the MDS for the subtidal mud feature and all relevant new commitments for the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants and Natural England met on 22 July 2025 to review outstanding offshore matters, with a focus on the principal areas of disagreement summary statement (PADSS). During the meeting, Natural England confirmed that subject to the Applicants setting out clear positions (above) and subject to review of updated application documents at Deadline 5, these matters are considered to be resolvable within the timeframe of the Examination
REP3-092 092.5	Natural England welcomes the removal of the option of 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within Fylde MCZ , and agrees with the Applicant that rock dump is the least recoverable type of protection. However, we continue to advise that a commitment to remove all on and above seabed infrastructure (including cable/scour protection) within benthic designated sites is secured in the DCO.	The Applicants note Natural England's approval of the removal of 'rock dump' as a cable protection option in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022) and Project Description (REP2-008).

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
		With regard to Natural England's final point, the Applicants have updated the draft DCO submitted at Deadline 4 (C1/F06) to include no 'rock dump' in Condition 18(e) of Schedules 14 and 15 to align with the commitment already made in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022). Regarding the requested commitment to decommissioning all infrastructure and cable protection (with the exception of cable crossings) within the Fylde MCZ, the Applicants responded previously to this point within RR-1601.42 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014). As detailed in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022), the Transmission Assets design is considering multiple cable protection options. The Outline CSIP (REP2-022) identifies that cable burial is the preferred option for cable protection where practicable (CoT54) and should cable protection be required within the Fylde MCZ, it will be designed to be removable (CoT108) with the requirement for removal agreed with stakeholders and regulators at the time of decommissioning (CoT109). The use of cable/scour protection, where required, will be evaluated and further considered post-consent in detailed CSIPs, focusing on both engineering suitability and environmental recoverability. The CSIPs are part of the Offshore Construction Method Statements that are secured in the Draft DCO (AS-004) in: • Condition 18(1)(e)(i) of Schedule 14 for the Morgan Offshore Wind Project: Transmission Assets; and • Condition 18(1)(e)(i) of Schedule 15 for the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm: Transmission Assets. The Applicants will submit a draft decommissioning programme to the Secretary of State for approval as required by the Energy Act 2004 prior to the commencement of construction. This is the standard approach for offshore wind farm and the decommissioning programme will be updated throughout the assets' lifespan to incorporate changing best practice and new technologies. Offshore decommissioning is secured under Requirement 21 of Schedule 2A and Schedule 2B of the draft DCO [REP 03-009] The Applicants position is aligned with the positions of the Morgan Generation Assets and Morecambe Generation Assets DCO applications and the recently made Orders for the Mona Offshore Wind Project and Sheringham and Dudgeon Extension Projects, the latter of which also has an export cable corridor overlapping an MCZ. The Applicants and Natural England met on 22 July 2025 to review outstanding offshore matters, with a focus on the principal areas of disagreement summary statement (PADSS), which allowed the Applicants to clarify their position regarding the removal of cable protection/scour protection from the Fylde MCZ at decommissioning during the issue specific hearing on 30 July 2025. It was noted that the Applicants and Natural England are not agreed on this matter.
REP3-092 092.6	Natural England reiterate our advice as detailed in RR-1601 Annex C point C28 and strongly recommend that a commitment is secured in the DCO for the removal of all infrastructure placed upon the seabed at the time of decommissioning both inside and outside of Fylde MCZ.	Please see the Applicants' response to REP1-092 092.5 above.
REP3-092 092.7	Natural England strongly disagrees that 'target' trench widths should be the same as realistic maximum design scenarios and require assurance that the 20 m width quoted within Table 3.6 is a realistic maximum design scenario. If this is not the case, Natural England advises that the MDS is appropriately updated.	Please see the Applicants' response to REP1-092 092.4 above.

4 Applicants' Response to Written Representations

4.1 Natural England REP3-093 – Appendix G3 to Natural England's Deadline 3 Submission

Table 4-1: REP3-093 – Appendix G3 to Natural England's Deadline 3 Submission

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
REP3-093 093.1	**1. Summary of Detailed Comments** The information provided in this Appendix is to offer further explanation and/or clarification on some of the complex risk and issues raised at Relevant Representations [RR-1601] and in Natural England's Risk and Issues Log (Appendix K3) and to aid issue resolution. Unless new information is submitted into Examination or we are specifically asked about a risk/issue by the Examiner this will remain Natural England's final position. The information provided below relating to soils is included in addition to Natural England's response to the Examining Authority's Written Questions 1 (ExQ1) [PD-008], Question 12.1.2. The points below each have the corresponding Risk and Issues Log (Appendix K3) reference number in brackets to identify the ongoing issue.	The Applicants note this response.
REP3-093 093.2	**1.1. Impacts to Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI (RI_G1)** Natural England attended a meeting under DAS with the Applicant on 12/06/25 to discuss their approach for producing the outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment. Natural England understands the Hydrogeological Risk Assessment will include a Preliminary Hydrogeological Risk Assessment informed by existing hydrogeological information from desk study information, Ground Investigation data, and National Vegetation Classification and Phase 1 habitat survey data presented in the ES. A hydrological model will also be presented. However, we reiterated the need for further survey effort in order to help our understanding of likely impacts to the SSSI sand dune features, in particular the dune slacks and adjacent BHS supporting S41 Priority Sand Dune habitat. Dune slacks are ground water and rainwater dependant features. Therefore, we advise that the further data includes NVC surveys of the sand dunes, and installation of dipwells and dataloggers to monitor the position of the water table and to record potential fluctuations that may arise as part of the proposals over the lifetime of the project. We understand data from the abstraction borehole ref: GWA_01 may also be available and that the borehole itself may be able to help understand the position of the sites water table. To date, the Applicant has presented a historical NVC survey of the SSSI (undertaken in 2016 by Skelcher for the Fylde Sand Dune Project Steering Group). However, this survey data is 9 years old and the survey does not cover the adjacent St Annes Old Links Golf Club which is the BHS. Natural England also advised that the Applicant should consider in-combination effects of water abstraction at the golf course and the dewatering effects of cable installation including potential seasonal fluctuations i.e. during drier summer conditions.	The Applicants submitted an Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment of Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI (REP3-061) and welcome Natural England's comments on this. This includes a risk assessment in section 3.4. The Applicants confirm that this was informed by existing hydrogeological information from desk study information, Ground Investigation data, and National Vegetation Classification and Phase 1 habitat survey data presented in the ES. The objective of the risk assessment is to determine the potential risk that construction activities associated with the installation of the offshore export cables beneath the Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI, Lytham St Annes LNR and St Annes Old Links Golf Course & Blackpool South Rail Line Biological Heritage Site (BHS) may pose to the sand dune features of these sites. With regard to sand dune habitats, the Applicants are currently undertaking an NVC survey of Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI and the results of these surveys will be submitted at Deadline 5. The Applicants have also requested data in regard to the abstraction borehole (ref GWA_01) however to date has not received anything. The Applicants would also reiterate that the NVC survey sheets in Appendix C of Volume 3, Annex 3.3: Phase 1 habitat, national vegetation classification and hedgerow survey technical report (APP-077) refer to the 2024 survey results undertaken by the Applicants. A comparison between the 2016 results and the ground truthing exercise undertaken in 2024 is made in Section 3.11.4 of Volume 3, Chapter 3: Onshore ecology and nature conservation (APP-075). With regard to monitoring the need for dipwells (automatic dataloggers) to monitor the position of the water table pre- and post-construction would be determined as part of the detailed hydrological risk assessments post consent.
REP3-093 093.3	**1.2. ALC Survey Effort (RI_G6)** In the absence of a detailed, site-specific soil and Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey and assuming that all mapped ALC Grade 3 land are Best and Most Versatile (BMV) soils (i.e. Subgrade 3a), it is not possible to provide an accurate baseline and demonstrate the likely potential impacts. So, whilst any mitigation may be regarded as precautionary, it means that the Applicant is unable to show how it avoids impacts to BMV soils nor the design of potential mitigation to safeguard the soil resources. The Environmental Statement (ES) should quantify the areas of land according to Grades 1 to 5 of the ALC, including differentiating between Grades 3a and 3b. While Natural England recognises the Applicant's acknowledgement of the deficiencies within the provisional dataset and that provisional mapping provides an indication of the ALC grade, and thus the potential impact on BMV agricultural land; it does not provide the soil details required to inform soil management which would feed into the Soil Management Plan. There is a risk of soil damage, ALC degradation and long term or permanent	The Applicants have responded previously to these points in RR-1601 1601.G.6 and 1601.G.13 (PDA-021) and within the Applicants' response to Hearing Action Points 'Agricultural land classification surveys' (REP1-043). The Applicants stand by their position and maintain that further survey is not required. The Applicants consider that the survey coverage is appropriate and has provided examples of other DCOs which have followed the same approach with regards to survey coverage. The Applicants' assessment is in accordance with best practice (as listed in section 6.2.3 of Volume 3, Chapter 6: Land use and recreation (APP-104)) and follows a precautionary approach with regards to the total area of BMV that could be affected. The same approach was used in the Mona Offshore Wind Project that was recently granted its DCO. The Applicants have committed to undertaking further soil surveys post consent. These surveys will include areas not previously surveyed within the Onshore Order Limits (for example, along the onshore export cable corridor) required for temporary and permanent use as part of the Transmission

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	loss of BMV soils from cable installation. Soil will need to be handled according to best practice and reinstated to a high standard to reduce the impacts. The results from a detailed ALC survey would provide soils data to inform a soil management plan for the whole site regardless of whether the use is permanent or temporary in nature and provide the Secretary of State with the necessary comfort in the mitigation measures. Once the ALC dataset is complete, it should be clearly presented within the ES, including a detailed breakdown of land take, and the proportion of BMV land, for each component of the onshore infrastructure associated with the development. This includes substations, cable corridors, construction compounds, access tracks, and any mitigation or enhancement areas. Such transparency is essential to inform the Secretary of States determination of the proposal's overall impact on agricultural land quality and soil health. Given that each infrastructure element may exert different pressures on soil structure, function, and long-term productivity, these distinctions should be explicitly addressed within the outline Soil Management Plan (SMP) to ensure appropriate mitigation and restoration strategies can be put in place. The SMP should then be finalised once the final design parameters are known and signed off by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the relevant SNCB.	Assets. These surveys would provide soil information (as set out in the Outline Soil Management Plan (APP-200)) with the purpose of informing the detailed Soil Management Plans. The detailed Soil Management Plans will be specific to the location within the Onshore Order Limits and the measures will reflect the specific characteristics of the soils and the infrastructure elements proposed in that location (temporary or permanent land requirements). Results from the soil surveys will be shared with Natural England. The Applicants note that the Outline Soil Management Plan has been drafted in accordance with best practice and includes the recognised soil handling and restoration guidance. The detailed Soil Management Plans will be based on the Outline Soil Management Plan and will be agreed with the relevant planning authority in consultation with Natural England, prior to the commencement of construction. The Applicants have committed to implement the detailed Soil Management Plan as agreed with the relevant planning authority. The Soil Management Plan forms part of the Code of Construction Practice and is secured in the draft DCO [REP 03-009]. With the commitments in place to undertake further soil surveys at detailed design stage prior to construction taking place as is standard for this type of linear project, the Applicants are unclear why Natural England require the surveys to be undertaken at this stage. The Applicants would welcome the opportunity to work through the points raised by Natural England. The Applicants consider this would be best achieved on a call with Natural England's soils specialist to explain the Applicants' approach and to work towards a solution. The Applicants have made a second request for this meeting and are awaiting a response.
REP3-093 093.4	**1.3. Assessment of Deep Peat (RI_G7)** Natural England reiterates that there is insufficient information on the impacts on peat; where the Applicant has considered impacts on deep peaty soils this has been combined with other elements such as loss of BMV land, ground gas generation on human health and other receptors and in the context of deposits of geoarchaeological and paleoenvironmental interest. Further evidence and surveys specifically on peat are therefore required. Natural England acknowledges that additional measures are included in the outline Soils Management Plan [APP-200], but we advise there is insufficient assessment to understand if these measures will be effective. We advise to resolve this issue the Applicant needs to consider the mitigation hierarchy, and if the peat is restorable. We advise in the first instance that impacts should be avoided where possible through the design of an appropriate scheme, if there is sufficient evidence for why this cannot be done mitigation or compensation may be required. The surveys should be completed pre-determination of the DCO, as identification of restorable peat may require changes to the design of the project in order to avoid the peat.	With regard to further evidence and surveys specifically on peat, the Applicants have previously responded to this point in RR-1601 1601.G.7 'Annex 3.2.14 to Response to RR - Natural England (RR-1601) - Appendix G (Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation) (PDA-021). The Applicants' position on this matter remains unchanged. In respect of peat management, the Applicants have prepared a peat technical note at Deadline 4 in response to the ExA's HAP14 (S_D4_15). The technical note consolidates information regarding the location and nature of peat resources within the Order Limits from existing information presented as part of the Environmental Statement, including but not limited to surface vegetation (i.e. ecological habitats indicative of underlying peat), buried archaeology (geoarchaeological and palaeoenvironmental deposits, including peat) and land use.
REP3-093 093.5	**1.4. ALC data presented in the Environmental Statement (RI_G11)** Natural England acknowledges the Applicant's effort to provide a conservative, worst-case assessment of agricultural land quality by applying the highest ALC grade within mixed soil types. However, in line with Paragraph 5.11.34 of the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1), it is essential that development proposals demonstrate how the use of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land, Grades 1, 2, and 3a, has been avoided where possible, and that any unavoidable impacts are clearly justified and appropriately mitigated. While the Applicant has presented ALC data and committed to further surveys prior to construction, Natural England remains concerned that the current assessment may not fully demonstrate how impacts to BMV land has been minimised across all elements of the Transmission Assets. The reliance on a worst-case assumption, while precautionary, does not substitute for a spatially explicit breakdown of BMV land take by infrastructure component, nor does it confirm whether alternative routing or siting options were considered to reduce BMV land losses.	Volume 1, Chapter 4: Site Selection and consideration of alternatives (AS-026) and the accompanying Volume 1, Annex 4.3: Selection and Refinement of the Onshore Infrastructure (APP-033) includes the consideration of the best and most versatile land as part of the wider assessment of all relevant environmental constraints and planning factors. For the consideration of ALC, the available published provisional ALC mapping does not differentiate between Grade 3a and 3b in the definition of Grade 3. As such, with respect to the Onshore Substation Search Zones and Substation Options, a precautionary approach was adopted, whereby areas of Grade 2 and 3 agricultural land were assigned an amber rating, as the Grade 3 areas and the soil types on which they were located could contain a significant proportion of the best and most versatile Subgrade 3a land (see Tables 4.7 and 4.10 (APP-033)). However, with respect to the onshore export cable corridor and the 400 kV grid connection cable corridor, Grade 3 agricultural land was assigned a green rating on the basis that land would be reinstated post-construction (see Tables 4.14 and 4.18 (APP-033)) as there would be no permanent loss of BMV land here. The Applicants were mindful of the potential presence of more sensitive peaty soils in terms of requirements for

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	To align with national policy, Natural England recommends that the Applicant: - Clearly demonstrate how the layout has sought to avoid BMV land; - Provide a transparent breakdown of BMV land affected by each infrastructure element; and - Ensures that the forthcoming detailed Soil Management Plan includes enforceable measures to protect and restore BMV soils during and after construction. This approach will help ensure that the proposal meets the policy expectation to avoid or mitigate impacts on valuable soil resources wherever feasible.	restoration within areas of Grade 2 land, particularly towards the western end of the onshore cable corridor. The Applicants have therefore been mindful of the requirement at paragraph 5.11.34 of NPS EN-1. However, the distribution of the provisional ALC mapping is shown on Figures 1.4 and 1.5 of Volume 3, Annex 6.1: Published Agricultural land classification and soils data (APP-105), shows the prevalence of high quality Grade 2 land in a broad swathe around the Transmission Assets boundary. Even if the cable route were to be moved north or south of its current alignment by up to several hundred metres, this would not make any significant difference to the areas of best and most versatile land affected. In addition, the land within the onshore cable route corridor would not be permanently affected, as the land will be restored to its pre-existing use, in accordance with the Outline Soil Management Plan (APP-200), secured by Requirement 8 of the draft DCO Schedules 2A & 2B (REP2-004). The siting of the onshore substations (which comprise most of the permanent land take) are located on Grade 3 (subgrade 3a) land. A breakdown of agricultural land quality for each of the onshore substations (permanent land take) according to soil surveys is provided in Table 6.10 of Volume 3, Chapter 6: Land use and recreation (APP-104).
REP3-093 093.6	**1.5. Soil Handling (RI_G12)** It is Natural England's advice that all soils should only be handled in a dry and friable condition, and it is expected that construction programmes would restrict soil handling to the drier summer period to minimise risk of soil damage (April through September) as far as reasonably practicable. This would minimise the possibility for on-site delays due to rainfall in the winter period, as well as the need to recondition soils, which requires additional space and time. Where this is not possible, clear additional management measures should be outlined, in line with DEFRA guidance. This is particularly important for land to be restored to agricultural use. Natural England advises that when soils are destined for long-term storage, it is essential that they are handled only when in a dry and friable condition to preserve their structure, biological integrity, and long-term fertility. To further protect the stored soil from erosion, nutrient loss, and degradation, sufficient time should be allowed for the establishment of a green cover, such as a fast-growing grass or cover crop, which stabilises the surface, enhances microbial activity, and helps maintain soil health during the storage period. This approach aligns with best practice in sustainable land management and ensures that soils remain viable for future restoration or reuse.	The Applicants note that section 1.7.5 of the outline soil management plan (APP-200) states that the assessment of whether soils are in a suitable condition to be handled will be applied in accordance with Construction Code of Practice (Defra, 2009) and Supplementary Note 4 - Soil Wetness of the Good Practice Guide for Handling Soils in Mineral Workings (IQ, 2021), where appropriate. The assessment will be based on ground and weather conditions and appropriate soil moisture and consistency tests. The most appropriate methodology for handling and storage of the soils will then be determined and agreed via the detailed Soil Management Plan(s) (secured by Requirement 8 of Schedules 2A & 2B of the draft DCO (REP3-009) based on the plasticity and the moisture content of the soils. In addition, with regard to soil storage, the Applicants note that Paragraph 1.7.3.5 of the Outline Soil Management Plan (APP-200) stipulates that the method of soil storage mound construction will be in accordance with the DEFRA Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites (Defra, 2009). This plan is secured via Requirement 8 of Schedules 2A & 2B of the draft DCO (REP3-009).

5 Applicants' Response to IPs' response to Written Questions (ExQ1)

Table 5-1: Natural England REP3-095 – Natural England's Responses to ExQ1

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
Cross Topic and General				
Q1.1.12	Any local authority, Natural England and the Environment Agency	Outline Code of Construction Practice The applicants Outline Code of Construction Practice (oCoCP) [APP-193] presents the framework and outline of measures to manage the environmental impacts during the construction phase of the proposed development. The detailed oCoCP will be supported via a series of management plans (listed in Table 1.1. of the oCoCP), outline versions of which have also been provided with the application. It is therefore an important document for the construction process. Please confirm whether you are satisfied that the oCoCP is sufficiently robust, precise and enforceable to provide effective management and mitigation of potential environmental impacts during the construction phases.	Natural England notes the oCoCP [APP-193] includes measures to manage the environmental impacts during the construction phase. The oCoCP includes the same commitments and mitigation which we have provided comments on throughout our Relevant Reps across the relevant topic areas. Therefore, our comments on specific environmental mitigation and commitments are equally applicable to any of the same information within the oCoCP document. We advise that any updates the Applicant makes to the commitments and environmental mitigation through the Examination period should also be reflected and updated in the oCoCP. We note that an outline plan during consent, the final plan as named on the DCO/dML will be agreed and signed off by the relevant regulator in consultation with the relevant SNCB, once the final to be built design is known and prior to construction.	The Applicants note Natural England's response. Commitments are under ongoing review will be updated as needed within the outline code of construction practice at appropriate deadlines.
2. The draft DCO; 2.1 Articles				
Q2.3.3	FBC, SRBC, PCC, LCC, Blackpool Borough Council, Natural England, Historic England, Environment Agency and any interested party	Remaining issues relating to the requirements will be considered at a subsequent issue specific hearing on the dDCO and further written questions if required. In order to provide for the efficient use of hearing time, the local authorities and any other relevant party are requested to consider the drafting of the draft requirements in Schedule 2 (A and B) and provide details of any disagreed matters, along with alternative drafting where applicable and any suggested additional requirements. Where applicable this may be done within the Statement of Common Ground between the applicants and the relevant interested party.	Natural England notes the Applicant has provided an updated dDCO at Deadlines 1 and 2. Where we consider updates to the dDCO have resolved our concerns, we have reflected this within the DCO/dML tab in our R&I log (Appendix K3). We can confirm a broad agreement on the following points: RI_A1, RI_A2, RI_A3 and RI_A9. Please note that there are some comments where our Relevant Representations position remains unchanged despite the Applicant's response in [PDA-015] and updated versions of the dDCO. However, we now consider the principal issues in relation to the DCO and dMLs have been resolved. We have reflected these updates in our Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS) submitted at Deadline 3 in the 'PADSS' tab of our R&I log (points: NE1, NE2).	The Applicants note this response and have provided responses to those outstanding points in the Applicants' response to the Natural England Risk & Issues Log (S_D4_2.6).
2.5 Schedules 14, 15, 16 and 17 – Marine Licences				
Q2.5.1	The applicants, Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and Natural England (NE)	The ExA acknowledges the submissions from the MMO, NE and other parties on the dDCO Marine Licences and the latest representations and responses made at D2. Noting that engagement on these matters is continuing between the parties, the ExA requests that the parties provide updates on their respective positions on the draft Marine Licences at D3, focusing on the remaining of areas of disagreement. The ExA will subsequently consider which	Our answer to Q2.3.3 is also applicable here.	The Applicants note this response and have provided responses to those outstanding points in the Applicants' response to the Natural England Risk & Issues Log (point: NE10).

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
		matters require examination during an issue specific hearing on the draft development consent order in week commencing 28 July 2025.		
6. Ecology, biodiversity and nature conservation (on-shore)				
Q6.1.1	Natural England (NE)	Survey effort and mitigation Comment on whether remaining concerns exist regarding: the quality of terrestrial ecological surveys in general undertaken by the applicants for the whole of the landward part of the proposed development? the conclusions the applicants have come to for the terrestrial ecological assessments for the whole of the landward part of the proposed development. the extent to which the appropriate guidelines and methodologies have been followed by the applicants when undertaking relevant terrestrial surveys for the whole of the landward part of the proposed development. the quality and likely effectiveness of the mitigation the applicants are proposing for potential impacts on terrestrial ecology for the whole of the landward part of the proposed development.	Natural England provided detailed comments on terrestrial ecological surveys within our Relevant Representations [RR-1601] and specific comments are included in Onshore and Intertidal Ornithology (Tab H) and Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation (Tab G) of our Risk and Issues Log (Appendix K3). Updates on specific comments at Deadline 3 are also included. In summary: Part (a): Whilst Natural England is satisfied with some of the ecological surveys undertaken for the landward part of the proposed development, gaps remain within the ecological surveys undertaken by the Applicant. Where survey effort is lacking, we have raised the issue in our Relevant Representations [RR-1601] and R&I Log Deadline 3. These include: Uncertainty around changes to the water table and effects of dewatering on the sand dune features of Lytham St Annes SSSI and sand dune habitat (S41 priority habitat under the NERC Act 2006) at St. Annes Old Links Golf Course (BHS) and Lytham Foreshore Dunes and Saltmarsh BHS (NE13, RI_G1). Lack of sand dune habitat survey effort to assess for any potential changes in habitat/ species composition associated with impacts, especially at St. Annes Old Links Golf Course BHS (NE15, RI_G2). The lack of Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey and soil survey effort across the full Study Area (NE16, RI_G6). Lack of information to rule out impacts for wintering, passage and terrestrial features of Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar (NE20, RI_H3, RI_H6). Part (b): Natural England does not agree with some of the conclusions for terrestrial ecological assessments. Where this is the case, we have raised the issue in RR- 1601 and R&I Log Deadline 3 (Appendix K3). These include: Inadequate assessment of the impacts on terrestrial waterbird features of the Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA and Ramsar site due to the conclusions being based on inappropriate modelled information on likely habitat availability across the SPA (RI_H6).	The Applicants maintain that the Project has obtained a good survey coverage level and have responded below to each of the perceived survey gaps that Natural England highlighted. Uncertainty around changes in the water table at Lytham St Annes SSSI The Applicants submitted an Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment of Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI (REP3-061) and welcome Natural England's comments on this. The objective of the risk assessment is to determine the potential risk that construction activities associated with the installation of the offshore export cables beneath the Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI, Lytham St Annes LNR and St Annes Old Links Golf Course & Blackpool South Rail Line Biological Heritage Site (BHS) may pose to the sand dune features of these sites. Sand Dune Habitat survey With regard to sand dune habitats, the Applicants are currently undertaking an NVC survey of Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI and the results of these surveys will be submitted at Deadline 5 and provided to NE. ALC and soil surveys The Applicants' position with regard to ALC and soil surveys remains unchanged from that presented in Annex 5.7 to the Applicants response to Hearing Action Points: ISH1 45 Agricultural Land Classification Surveys (REP1-043). The Applicants have requested further engagement with Natural England to resolve their concerns. Potential impacts to wintering, passage and terrestrial features of Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site Regarding information to rule out impacts for wintering, passage and terrestrial features the Applicants presented further detail to Natural

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
			The assertation that the percentage of Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA qualifying features is not significant in regard to the temporary loss of supporting habitat and/or resource availability (RI_H33). The conclusion of no adverse impacts for temporary loss of supporting habitats and/or resource availability for the qualifying species of Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA that utilise terrestrial habitats (RI_H34, RI_H37 and RI_H45). We note that for Onshore and Intertidal Ornithology the Applicant submitted additional information as requested at Deadline 2. Our R&I Log at Deadline 3 provides updates on some of these matters. Following on from Part (a) – until further evidence is presented it is unlikely that we will be able to advise on the appropriateness of the Applicant's conclusions. Part (c): Natural England advises that whilst we are satisfied that some appropriate guidelines and methodologies have been followed by the Applicant, for some specific impacts and receptors survey effort is lacking and there is insufficient information to fully understand the potential impacts the development may have. Please see points above for parts (a) and (b) and [RR-1601]. Part (d): We advise that further information is still required to be confident of the effectiveness of the mitigation, as commented on in [RR-1601]. These issues are in progress for Onshore and Intertidal Ornithology and updates are included in tab H of the R&I Log Deadline 3. These include: Adverse effects on the Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA and Ramsar passage features and terrestrial features (NE20, RI_H4). The suitability of mitigation areas: Fairhaven Saltmarsh, Lytham Mosses and area near Newton-with-Scales (NE18, NE20, RI_H51) The overall level of detail provided within the mitigation area summaries for intertidal mitigation and terrestrial mitigation (RI_H3, RI_H7). In addition, Natural England advises where further ecological surveys or assessment is required, there is uncertainty around the effectiveness of any mitigation which may subsequently be required for impacts where detail is lacking. Any mitigation required should be informed by the best and most available evidence and a robust assessment.	England on 25 July 2025. This material was well received by Natural England and the Applicants are providing this to the examination in a Terrestrial Waterbirds technical note (S_D4_17) at Deadline 4. The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's position regarding the unresolved onshore and intertidal ornithology matters and remain committed to working collaboratively with Natural England to resolve these matters. As part of this, the Applicants met with Natural England on 25 July 2025 and have provided the following updated information at Deadline 4. S_D4_18 – Passage birds at the landfall technical note S_D4_17 – Terrestrial waterbirds technical note ISH2.12 - a 'Clarification note on the current position with Natural England (re Adverse Effect on Integrity) and the Fairhaven saltmarsh mitigation area' in response to ISH 2 hearing action point 12 which clarifies the current position with Natural England (re adverse effect on integrity) and the Fairhaven saltmarsh mitigation area. Updates to the Outline Ecological Management Plan (APP-212) c) The Applicants refer Natural England to the Applicants' response to Q6.1.1c in Applicants' Response to Examining Authority's Written Questions (ExQ1) (REP3-056). Information on survey effort has been provided in responses Q6.1.1(b and c) above. Please see response to Q6.1.1(b) above.
Q6.1.2	NE (a), The applicants (b-c)	Ribble and Alt Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site	Under the mitigation hierarchy, mitigation can be defined as measures which are put in place to prevent or minimise negative impacts and effects from occurring in the first place or 'at source'. By way of example, please see the Chartered Institute of Ecologists and	The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's response. The Applicants' position remains unchanged from that previously submitted at

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
		Fairhaven Saltmarsh is identified in the Outline Ecological Management Plan [REP2-019] as a permanent mitigation area. NE stated that the proposed roosting refuge would constitute compensatory measures under the Habitats Regulations, not mitigation as stated by the applicants [RR-1601] ref.H5. Accordingly, a far more detailed submission regarding the installation and management of the compensatory measures is needed, and a compensation schedule in the draft development consent order (DCO) added. Explain why Fairhaven Saltmarsh could constitute compensatory measures under the Habitats Regulations? Explain why you consider Fairhaven Saltmarsh as a mitigation area and not a compensatory measure? Provide an update on negotiations regarding this issue.	Environmental Managers Ecological Impact Assessment guidance (EcIA-Guidelines-v1.3-Sept-2024.pdf). The creation of a safe high-tide roost at Fairhaven Saltmarsh would not prevent or reduce the impacts of the proposed development on those SPA/Ramsar site waterbirds – the effects of disturbance and displacement would continue to be felt by the waterbirds at that location. Instead, the proposal would 'offset' the energetic consequences of the development on SPA/Ramsar birds by increased energetic savings for waterbirds at another location and during another part of the tidal cycle. This safe roosting habitat may well benefit some individuals affected by the cable installation works, as well as other birds forming part of the overall SPA/Ramsar site population. In our view, given this is essentially an offsetting rather than an impact reducing measure, the Fairhaven Saltmarsh proposal should be considered as a compensatory measure rather than mitigation. This well- established interpretation is informed by Habitats Directive case law on the subject, which has previously ruled that measures provided for in a project which are aimed at compensating for the negative effects of the project cannot be taken into account in its appropriate assessment, albeit these relate to permanent habitat loss rather than construction phase impacts. In particular we highlight the Grace & Sweetman ruling (EUR-Lex - 62017CJ0164 - EN - EUR-Lex). This is reflected in the Habitats Regulations 2017 which, at regulation 68, states that only where a plan or project is agreed to in accordance with regulation 64, despite a negative appropriate assessment of its implications for a European site, should the appropriate authority secure any necessary compensatory measures are taken to ensure that the overall coherence of the National [European] Site Network is protected. Since receiving our Relevant Representations, the Applicant has made a welcome commitment to avoiding works between 1 November and 31 March inclusive, a mitigation measure that will mean that impacts during the sensitive winter period will be avoided. Our outstanding concerns relate to disturbance of SPA/Ramsar site waterbirds during the passage period; nevertheless, we consider that the distinction made between mitigation and off-setting remains valid. Were the Applicant able to reduce disturbance effects at the landfall during the passage season to acceptable levels through mitigation, it would offer in our view sufficient certainty to rule out adverse effects. Were this to be the case, the Fairhaven Saltmarsh proposal could be seen as either addressing the residual, non-AEoI effects of the development, or alternatively as an enhancement measure.	Deadline 3 (S_D3_3 Applicants' Response to Examining Authority's Written Questions (ExQ1) - Rev F01(REP3-056)). However, the Applicants are clear in their position that through adoption of the seasonal restriction and proposed measures to reduce impacts at source (e.g. screening, ECoW, etc, as set out in section 1.6 of the updated Outline Ecological Management Plan submitted at Deadline 4) there will be no AEoI. The Applicants have clarified this in a 'Clarification note on the current position with Natural England (re Adverse Effect on Integrity) and the Fairhaven saltmarsh mitigation area' (ISH2.12)
Q6.1.3	NE	Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA and Ramsar site	Natural England agrees with the Applicant's conclusion of no AEoI specifically for over wintering features of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site from the cable landfall works in the intertidal zone	The Applicants remain fully committed to addressing these matters and to working collaboratively with Natural England to reach a resolution. In support of this commitment. The Applicants met with Natural England on

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
		After commitment (CoT)129 [REP2-011] has been updated to strengthen the working restrictions within the intertidal area to a full restriction between Nov – Mar, can you confirm whether you agree with the applicants' conclusions of no adverse effects on integrity and whether an in-principle derogations case for the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site is no longer required.	following CoT129. It is worth noting though that we retain our concerns regarding SPA over wintering features as a result of impacts to Functionally Linked Land (FLL) from the onshore cable route. Further, Natural England does not agree with the Applicant's conclusion of no AEoI for the passage features of Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site from the cable landfall works in the intertidal zone. Natural England has been working with the Applicant through our Discretionary Advice Service (DAS) to resolve these issues and we have provided comments on some of the material submitted by the Applicant at D2 [REP2-044] in our Risk and Issues Log submitted at D3 (Appendix K). Unfortunately, as set out in our Deadline 3 cover letter, due to unforeseen circumstances, our review of REP2- 045 is ongoing. We will provide our advice as soon as possible.	25 July 2025 and are working closely with Natural England to address this issue and are currently in discussions about measures to reduce impacts at source.
Q6.1.4	NE	Technical notes At deadline 2 the applicants have submitted "Technical note on the energetics of the birds at landfall and the adequacy of the Fairhaven Saltmarsh" [REP2-045] and "Technical note on Newton Marsh SSSI and River Ribble Crossing" [REP2-044]. Can you confirm if the information in those notes resolves outstanding relevant issues in the Risk and Issues Log [REP2-063].	REP2-044 provides sufficient information to resolve our comments relating to Newton Marsh SSSI and the River Ribble crossing. These updates are reflected in tab H of the Risk and Issues Log submitted at D3 (Appendix K). As noted above, our review of REP2-045 is ongoing.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's decision.
Q6.1.5	NE, Lancashire County Council (LCC), Fylde Borough Council (FBC) and any other IP	Protected species - sand dunes habitat surveys In chapter 3 of the Environmental Statement: Onshore ecology and nature conservation [APP-075], it is stated that further surveys are not considered necessary for the transmission assets due to existing survey information available being sufficient to assess the potential impacts to the species. Why is existing available survey information (Fylde Sand Dune Project Steering Group) not considered enough to establish a baseline?	Natural England is unable to advise further on the sufficiency/robustness of the evidence until further Metadata is provided to inform the impacts of development on the Species This is because the data used to interpret sand lizard distribution is reliant on a heat map compiled by data collected from focal observations by Fylde Sand Dune Project Steering Group, though the raw data has not been included within Annex 3.8: Great crested newt and reptile survey technical report [APP-082]. Additional information should include timings and experience/knowledge of those conducting the surveys and collecting data. Reptile data from refugia would not be accepted as a reliable method of collecting data on sand lizard presence/distribution/population size. Natural England also notes that the sand dunes at Lytham are accreting (see Skelcher 2024 "A review of ecological change in relation to management interventions undertaken on the Fylde Sand Dunes Project, Lancashire final report") which shows in Maps 2 & 3 increases in frontal dunes achieved through accretion management. The report also contains images of the frontal dunes which are Marram and Lyme Grass dominated with a good proportion of bare sand which is good sand lizard habitat. The same dune accretion can also be seen and measured by looking at recent aerial images. Therefore, although the exit pits are positioned 100m from the SSSI seaward boundary the frontal dunes are at least 40m further seaward.	Further metadata on the population size and distribution of sand lizard at Lytham St Anne's Dunes SSSI would not change the outcome of the ecological impact assessment or the approach to mitigation. The survey data provided by the Fylde Sand Dunes Project through their annual monitoring work (which is undertaken by a licensed ecologist with an appropriate Natural England survey licence) has confirmed that sand lizards are present in the dunes in the vicinity of construction works. The survey data indicated that there is a known 'hotspot' around the dune accretion area at the seaward end of the beach access road, presumably due to the larger areas of bare sand at this location, which the species prefers for basking and burrow construction. The ecological sensitivity of the sand dune habitats (section 3.11.4 of Volume 3, Chapter 3: Onshore ecology and nature conservation (APP-075) and the sand lizards (section 3.11.13 of Volume 3, Chapter 3: Onshore ecology and nature conservation (APP-075) is acknowledged in the ecological impact assessment, and accordingly the Applicants have committed to a range of avoidance and mitigation measures to protect these sensitive ecological features. The Applicants have prepared and submitted an Outline Sand Lizard Mitigation Plan (S_D4_14), which forms an appendix to the Outline Ecological Management Plan (OEMP) (J6/F04) to provide further clarification on the reasonable avoidance and mitigation measures that will be adopted during construction to ensure the protection of the sand lizard population. It is not considered that the construction activities meet the threshold for licensing because the activities proposed during

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
			This needs confirming on the ground. This point is also captured in the R&I Log – RI_G21.	construction would not deliberately kill, injure or disturb sand lizards, would not result in the taking or destruction of eggs, and would not damage or disturb their breeding sites or resting places. The legal definition of 'disturbance' being to impair their ability to survive or reproduce, rear or nurture young, hibernate or migrate, or to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species. The beach access road is already used by vehicles (for beach maintenance operations undertaken by Fylde Borough Council) and pedestrians/ dog walkers to access the beach, and the beach and dunes are accessible to the public. The seaward accretion of the sand dunes as a result of the positive management interventions by the Fylde Sand Dunes Project (e.g. through the Christmas tree project) is noted by the Applicants, and they can confirm that the 100 m buffer from the boundary of the SSSI has taken into account the dune accretion rates. It is understood by the Applicants that there is a preference that the metadata should not be made public due to the sensitive nature of the records. The Applicants suggest that Natural England requests this information from the Fylde Sands Dunes Project directly.
Q6.1.6	The applicants (a- c), NE, LCC, FBC, Environment Agency (EA) and any other interested party (d)	Sand dunes (Lytham St. Anne's SSSI, Local Nature Reserve, Biological Heritage Site, Geological Heritage Site) "The applicants reiterate that there would be no direct impacts to the sand dune habitats or sand lizard population at Lytham St Anne's SSSI, LNR, BHS and GHS as a result of the construction of the project, because the dunes will be crossed using trenchless technology. The entry and exit pits associated with the trenchless crossing will be of a sufficient distance away from Lytham St Anne's SSSI to ensure there are no direct impacts. The depth of the trenchless crossing of the dunes will be confirmed at the detailed design stage following ground investigation works, but it should be noted that this is a standard construction approach that is adopted to avoid impacts on sensitive habitat features. The applicants note that several stakeholders have raised concerns about potential indirect effects to the dune habitats as a result of the trenchless crossing, and therefore are preparing further information to be submitted at D3" [REP2-036 reference REP1-210 210.11]. CoT102 [REP2-011] makes references to "unforeseen circumstances" ("Where closures are required for longer periods due to unforeseen circumstances encountered during construction"). a) Could those "unforeseen circumstances" cause direct impacts to the sand dune habitats or sand lizard population as a result of installation of the offshore export cables? b) Explain and provide a full list of potential consequences that could be connected to the unforeseen circumstances. c) As the possibility of "unforeseen circumstances" that could lead to prolonged closures of sections of public rights of way is acknowledged in the commitments register, why has an outline contingency plan (with an assessment of worst case scenario) not been submitted? d) Explain if you agree with the applicants' conclusions regarding no direct impacts to the sand dune habitats or sand lizard population as a result of the installation of the offshore export cables.	With regards to impacts to sand dune habitats, we maintain that we are unable to rule out impacts to sand dune SSSI features as previously raised in our relevant reps [RR-1601] and reiterate our points; RI_G1, RI_G2, RI_G3, RI_G4, RI_G5, RI_G9, RI_G10, RI_G21, RI_G24, RI_G24, RI_G25 and RI_G40 in the Risk and Issues Log (Appendix K3) and our response in Appendix G3 at Deadline 3, which relate to this matter. Whilst sand lizards aren't a notified feature of Lytham St. Anne's SSSI, we highlight that the dunes are a supporting habitat for sand lizards and reiterate the importance of maintaining suitable habitats for EPS. Therefore Natural England does not agree that there are no direct impacts to the sand lizard population and/or their habitat as there is insufficient robust survey data to quantify this. In the absence of further data it would be prudent to assume presence across the impacted area. Sand lizards are mobile and are not confined to human delineated non- physical boundaries (such as designated site boundaries etc). Natural England still has concerns over potential unforeseen circumstances which could cause direct impacts on sand lizard populations, e.g. 1. Damage and/ or disturbance to habitat from noise and vibration from construction. 2. Damage and disturbance from increased footfall from construction workers and vehicles. 3. Pollution from noise, airborne dust impacting vegetation used for foraging of invertebrate prey. 4. See response to Q6.1.5 – the sand dunes are accreting in this area, whereby the SSSI boundary no longer aligns with the frontal dunes where sand lizards could be at the time of construction. There is therefore uncertainty regarding the scale of impacts to sand lizards. As such NE does not agree that there is no direct risk to sand lizards or their habitat.	
Q6.1.7	NE (a-c), The applicants (b-c)	European protected species (EPS) onshore The applicants state [PDA-022 1601.G.51-56] that additional surveys will be undertaken closer to the time of construction to ascertain if licences are required. They state that this is secured by Requirement 13 within Schedules 2A & 2B of the dDCO. Any	Natural England raise the following points: More information is required on sand lizard distribution, the status of a noctule roost and otter resting places in order to fully ascertain the impacts on European Protected species, as outline in our Written	The Applicants would like to reiterate that they are not intending to submit any draft EPS licences to Natural England at this stage to obtain a Letter Of No Impediment (LONI) during the examination phase, as the survey work completed to date has not identified any requirements for EPS licensing (with the exception of great crested newts). However, if the status of any EPS is found to have changed during pre-construction

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
		EPS licenses will be agreed with NE as the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Body. Are you satisfied with this approach? What would happen if any of the required EPS licences are not secured. Is likely that a Letter of No Impediment will be issued before the close of this Examination? The Examining Authority (ExA) requests that the applicants provide an update on this issue at each deadline.	Representations. Until such information is provided Natural England is unable to provide more detailed advice on whether licences will be required for these species is required, unless presence is assumed across the impacted area and works are mitigated for accordingly. It is down to the Applicant's named ecologist to decide if works are likely to negatively impact EPS in the short, medium and long-term and if this should be covered under licence. At this moment in time, it is unlikely that a Letter of No Impediment would be provided by NE licensing to inform the examination. The detail required for a licence assessment has not been provided. Advice provided in our Relevant Representations is still applicable (G54). We encourage the Applicant to contact our Licencing team regarding submitting a draft licence/relevant level of information and obtaining a LONI.	surveys such that a licence would be considered to be necessary, the appropriate applications would be made at that time. This is secured through requirement 13 of Schedules 2A and 2B of the draft DCO [REP 3-009]. The Applicants have applied to Natural England to join the District Level Licensing (DLL) for great crested newt and therefore intend to submit the Impact Assessment Conservation Payment Certificate (IACPC) to the ExA before the close of the examination. This confirms Natural England's acceptance of the project into the DLL scheme for great crested newt (and the conservation payment amount) and therefore serves the same purpose as a Letter of No Impediment. The Applicants are still in discussions with the Natural England licensing team on this matter.
Q6.1.10	The applicants (a), NE, EA, NE, FBC, SRBC, Preston City Council (PCC), LCC, Blackpool Borough Council (BBC) (b)	Commitments CoT16 [REP2-010] states "All vegetation requiring removal will be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season. If this is not reasonably practicable, the vegetation requiring removal will be subject to a nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecological clerk of works. If nesting birds are present, the vegetation will not be removed until the young have fledged or the nest failed." Define under what circumstances it wouldn't be "reasonably practicable"? Do you consider the proposed wording to be adequate?	We consider the current wording regarding vegetation removal is not sufficiently robust, specifically the inclusion of 'reasonably practicable'. The Applicant should in the first instance define their work programme in a way that ensures vegetation removal does occur outside the breeding bird season. The rest of the commitment is adequate; however, the Applicant could consider amending the wording to refer to 'nesting vegetation' as well as include wording to leave adjacent areas undisturbed to prevent disturbance and in turn abandonment of a nest. We note that some areas where vegetation removal will occur, for example the Export Cable Corridor, may support other protected species. Specifically, we wish to highlight the large population of sand lizards in this area and that any vegetation removal may remove habitat essential to their life cycle and/or result in the injury/ killing of lizard populations. We therefore advise that the impacts on other protected species are considered in the scheduling and design of vegetation removal, and that where possible alternatives to vegetation removal, such as timings of works, are considered in order to best maintain all populations of all protected species/ birds.	The Applicants note that this is standard text and is widely used for other similar DCOs (e.g., Hornsea 4, Outer Dowsing, etc), However, the Applicants propose a change in wording to say: "All vegetation requiring removal will be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season. If this is not reasonably practicable, the vegetation requiring removal will be subject to a nesting vegetation check by a suitably qualified ecological clerk of works. If nesting birds are present, the vegetation and adjacent area will not be removed or disturbed until the young have fledged or the nest failed." The Applicants would like to reiterate that there would be no removal of vegetation within the sensitive sand dunes of the Lytham St Anne's Dunes SSSI the installation of the offshore export cable will be installed via trenchless techniques beneath Lytham St Annes SSSI. Further comments on the approach to avoidance and mitigation measures for sand lizard are presented in the response to Q6.1.5.
Q6.1.13	The applicants (a- b), NE, EA, FBC, SRBC, PCC, LCC, BBC (c)	Commitments CoT101 [REP2-010] states "Where high concentrations of peat are identified these, will be avoided where practicably possible for the placement of the plant and infrastructure to avoid the possibility of ground gas build up. Where this is not possible, further investigation and appropriate monitoring will be identified undertaken, if necessary". Explain how you will determine if it's "practicably possible" to avoid high concentrations of peat that are identified.	Natural England advises that until further evidence/information is submitted into examination we are unable to advice on the scale and significance of the potential impacts. As set out in our previous comments [RR-1601] and in our R&I Log (RI_G7) there is insufficient information in regarding to the presence of restorable deep peat. To determine the presence of restorable deep peat, further peat surveys need to be undertaken. Once the peat surveys are undertaken, and if it is determined that restorable deep peat is present, we advise that an assessment should be undertaken to consider the impacts from the project, and any mitigation measures (following the mitigation hierarchy), including potential changes to the design of the scheme to avoid impacts on	The Applicants have submitted a Peat Technical Note (S_D4_15) at Deadline 4 that provides Natural England with further information on potential impacts to deep peat. The note provides a collation of the information on peat deposits and peaty soils within the Transmission Assets ES and the findings of both the desk top and survey work undertaken. In addition, it provides a summary of the documents where references to peat is made along with how the responses from Natural England's D3 submissions have been considered and addressed (where appropriate). Details of additional measures for soil handling of peat soils including any additional surveys where deemed necessary are included in section 1.8.6 of the outline soil management plan (J1.7/F02).

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
		Explain the decision-making process in relation to determining if further investigation and appropriate monitoring is necessary. Do you consider the proposed wording to be adequate?	any restorable deep peat which may be required. Further information is provided in RI_G7 of our R&I Log at Deadline 3.	
Q6.1.14	The applicants (a- b), NE, EA, FBC, SRBC, PCC, LCC, BBC (c)	Commitments CoT126 [REP2-010] "To mitigate for potential temporary habitat loss associated with Mill Brook Valley Biological Heritage Site, temporary construction compounds will be micro-sited to avoid the site wherever reasonably practicable." Define "wherever reasonably practicable". Explain how you will mitigate for potential temporary habitat loss if it's not deemed "reasonably practicable". Do you consider the proposed wording to be adequate?	BHS are not within Natural England's remit; we defer to the relevant Local Planning Authority to provide a response to this question.	The Applicants note this comment.
Q6.1.15	NE, EA and any other interested party	Mitigation Paragraph 1.2.1.8 of 'Site Selection of the Environmental Mitigation and Biodiversity Benefit Areas' [REP2-046] states "In accordance, with CAP 772 guidance (Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), 2017) the wildlife hazard management zones around Blackpool Airport and BAE Warton Aerodrome extend to 13 km" and paragraph 1.2.1.9 states "Given the extent of the wildlife hazard management zones in relation to the Transmission Order Limits, the applicants could not locate environmental mitigation and benefit areas outside of the wildlife hazard zones whilst also meeting their site selection guiding principles (as set out in paragraphs 1.2.1.2 and 1.2.1.3) and ultimately delivering effective mitigation." Paragraph 1.5.1.3 states "The search area also considered areas in proximity to designated habitats or priority habitats, with the objective of improving habitats that are functionally linked to designated sites and improving connectivity between habitats." a) Do you agree that effective mitigation could not be achieved outside wildlife hazard management zones in relation to the Transmission Order Limits? b) Do you agree that biodiversity benefit area objectives would not be met if it was located outside of the wildlife hazard zones?	As a general rule, mitigation should be applied as close as possible to the point of impact. We highlight that the fundamental purpose of the mitigation is to address the impacts, which should result in no overall net change in risk within the airport area of concern. The Airport's area of concern is extensive and already overlaps significant areas of Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA Functionally Linked Land (FLL) and the SPA/Ramsar site itself. Therefore, we advise there is more emphasis on maintaining the natural state of the remaining unimpacted areas within the SPA and FLL through avoidance and where that is not possible, making every effort to reduce/minimise impacts. Having to relocate mitigation beyond the Airport's area of concern would likely impose a significant energetic impact on species impacted in the FLL area. Plus, we advise that there is a higher likelihood of the new mitigation area not providing the required ecological functionality of that lost, so would risk not being ecologically appropriate.	The Applicants note that these were the principles that were used to determine the mitigation and biodiversity benefit areas and welcome Natural England's clarification that the approach used was correct.
6.2 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)				

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
Q6.2.1	The applicants (a- c), NE, FBC, SRBC, PCC, LCC, BBC and any other interested party (d)	Biodiversity calculations: Provide reasoning for the proposed percentage (%) in the biodiversity benefit strategy - 59.62% increase for the habitat, 20% for watercourse, 41.37% for hedgerow. Explain in detail the methodology used and why the scheme won't fully comply with future biodiversity net gain requirements i.e why the whole length of the corridor has not been assessed? The ExA requests the BNG metric spreadsheet used for the calculations is submitted into the examination. Confirm whether clarity exists on how the calculations have been done and is there agreement on the methodology and the spatial areas for which the calculations have been presented?	As noted in G46 [RR-1601], Natural England has no further comments to make on BNG, the development is not subject to a mandatory net gain requirement, therefore unless there are changes in the design parameters we have no further comments.	The Applicants note this comment.
Q6.2.2	NE, FBC, SRBC, PCC, LCC, BBC	Mitigation Hierarchy Confirm that the applicants have adequately followed the mitigation hierarchy in respect to no biodiversity net loss and biodiversity net gain.	Based on the information submitted within the Onshore Biodiversity Benefit Statement [REP2-021], Natural England is satisfied that the Applicant has adequately followed the mitigation hierarchy in respect of no biodiversity net loss. The Applicant aimed to retain and reduce impacts on habitat where possible and will provide an increase of habitat units where habitat will be permanently lost as a result of the project though habitat creation and enhancement works. However, we wish to highlight that some impact pathways still require additional information and assessments to be provided, as outlined in our Relevant Representations and in our Risk and Issues log, and that until such information is provided, we are unable to advise on whether the proposed mitigation is sufficient for these impacts. We have not engaged with the Applicant on Biodiversity Net Gain, so are unable to provide detailed comments on this aspect.	The Applicants note this comment and welcome Natural England's clarification that the mitigation hierarchy has been adequately followed.
Q6.2.3	The applicants (a- b), NE, EA, FBC, SRBC, PCC, LCC, BBC (c)	Site selection Selection guiding principles are set out in paragraphs 1.2.1.2 and 1.2.1.3 of Site Selection of the Environmental Mitigation and Biodiversity Benefit Areas [REP2-046] submitted at D2. a) Explain why the selection guiding principles set out do not include specific safety considerations and policy requirements including potential for increased risk to defence activities? b) Explain if any alternatives for BNG strategy have been considered, including off-site delivery. c) If BNG requirements and the avoidance and/or mitigation of defence aviation risks cannot be met, please explain how	Natural England advises that (a) & (b) are not our remit. c) Natural England understand that the baseline area will likely be refined over time and subsequent iterations of the metric calculations required. Natural England encourages the Applicant to continue to maximise their potential biodiversity outcomes throughout the detailed design process. If land identified for BNG within the redline boundary subsequently cannot be used for BNG, the Applicant will need to re-run the metric and secure the minimum 10% required to secure BNG by other means.	The Applicants note this comment. A revised version of the Onshore Biodiversity Benefit Statement (J11/F04) has been submitted at Deadline 4 to update the assessment using the 'statutory DEFRA metric' calculator (noting that Version 4.1 was used in the original application, which has since been superseded).

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
		excluding BNG areas from the order limits might affect your comments on the application.		
7. Environmental Matters (off-shore)				
7.1 Benthic Ecology				
Q7.1.4	NE	Assessments In their D2 submission [REP2-034] the applicants are still maintaining their position that contrary to your stated position in [RR- 1601], [REP1-092] and [REP1-093] a robust and accurate assessment of all potential impacts on benthic ecology has been carried out. What additional assessment/ information do you require to reach an agreement on this issue?	We refer back to our advice in [RR-1601] Natural England advises that clarity is provided within the Application documents on the likely impacts from using Direct Pipe cable installation techniques. We advise that the following is provided and updated within the Application documents: • Scour protection requirements at the direct pipe exit and/or entry locations; • Cable/scour protection requirements in the intertidal and subsequent mitigation; and • MDS for the sum of both projects for 'maximum cofferdam area dimensions' to be included in Tables 3.6 and 3.13. We also advise that an Outline landfall management plan should be provided at the time of consent. All landfall impacts, including subtidal impacts, should be considered collectively to determine management/ mitigation measures to ensure that significant impacts (both direct and indirect) are avoided to designated site features. Natural England advises that a further assessment of the feasibility of the cable installation tools in shallow waters is required to support the worst-case scenario assessment. Natural England notes that the MDS for Pre-Lay Grapnel Run (PLGR), Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) clearance and boulder clearance have not been fully assessed within the ES Chapters. There is no certainty that these activities will be undertaken at the same time or within the same footprint as the other site preparation activities especially in relation to boulder relocation. We advise that the MDS for PLGR, UXO clearance and boulder clearance are presented within the Project Description and all other relevant chapters in line with Natural England's Best Practice Guidance Phase III. We note the updated MDS parameters for sandwave clearance in Table 1.1 [REP1-064] which lists the errata for sandwave clearance in [APP-045]. Once the changes are made to the applicable application documents and submitted into Examination this matter will be resolved. Any potential gap between cable installation should also be presented in relation to WCS as well as further refinement of WCS for cable protection.	The Applicants have responded to each of the points made by NE below. Additionally, under each point, any updates required to application documents at Deadline 5 is set out to ensure that Natural England and the Examining Authority are aware of what updates will be provided at Deadline 5, where relevant. **Scour protection requirements at the direct pipe exit and in the intertidal** With regards to the requirements for scour protection at the direct pipe exit and/or entry locations and cable/scour protection requirements in the intertidal, as outlined in the Applicants' response to RR.1601.C.11 (PDA-017), the Applicants have made a commitment (CoT114) to ensure that all permanent infrastructure (i.e. the offshore export cables) located between mean low water springs (MLWS) and mean high water springs (MHWS) will be buried to a target depth of 3 m. Further to this, the Applicants have included a new commitment that no cable/scour protection shall be permanently deployed in the intertidal area between MLWS and MHWS in the Commitments Register submitted at Deadline 4 (CoT133, F1.5.3/F05). **MDS for cofferdams** With regards to Natural England's request for the sum of both projects for 'maximum cofferdam area dimensions' to be included in Tables 3.6 and 3.13, the Applicants have responded to this in full in the Applicants' response to RR.1601.C.11 (PDA-017). The maximum design parameters have not been provided for the sum of both projects in Tables 3.6 and 3.13 of Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description (REP2-008) because only Morgan OWL or Morecambe OWL are able to undertake work on the beach at any given time as detailed in section 3.10.2 and section 3.14.5.15 of Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description (REP2-008). The Applicants have made a commitment (CoT27) to remove temporary construction compounds (including cofferdams) and reinstate the site once construction has been completed. This is secured in Requirements 8 and 16 of Schedules 2A & 2B of the draft DCO (REP3-009)..Therefore, cofferdams required by Morgan OWL and Morecambe OWL would not be constructed in the intertidal at the same time. *Application document updates for Deadline 5:* The explanation for the cofferdam MDS was set out in Annex 5.3 to the Applicants response to ISH1 Hearing Action Points (REP1-040). Therefore, the Applicants will update the Project Description and relevant ES chapters at Deadline 5 to ensure that the MDS for cofferdams is clear.

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
			For progression towards resolution on the above please see Appendix K our R&I log points: RI_B1, B13, B2, B3, B5, B10, B9+B11, B12, B16, B20, B32+B34.RI_C2, C5, C6, C7, C8, C11+C20, C13+C19, C14+15, C16, C18, C21 and C22.	**Outline landfall management plan** With regards to Natural England's request for an Outline landfall management plan, as stated during Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2), the Applicants did not think that a plan was necessary as they have provided the following in lieu of an outline plan: The detailed description of the landfall works set out in Annex 5.3 to the Applicants response to Hearing Action Points (REP1-040), which will be incorporated into the updated Project Description Chapter as required at Deadline 5. Commitment to a minimum separation distance between cofferdams and the Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI of 100m (CoT44) and new commitment to no permanent cable/scour protection between MLWS and MHWS included in the updated Commitments Register at Deadline 4 (F1.5.3/F05) However, the Applicants have since decided to prepare an outline landfall construction method statement to address Natural England's request. It has not been possible to prepare this in time for Deadline 4 and therefore the Applicants intend to submit this document into the examination in w/c 18 August so that it can be formally responded to by NE and the MMO at Deadline 5. The Applicants recognise that accpetance of this document into examination will be at the discretion of the Examining Authority.. **Cable installation in shallow water** With regards to Natural England's request for further information relating to the feasibility of the cable installation tools in shallow waters, the Applicants have responded to this point in full in the Applicants' response to RR.1601.B.11 (PDA-016). In summary, the information presented within the Outline Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA) (APP-219) and Outline CSIP (REP2-022) show that ploughing, jetting and cutting are suitable installation techniques for the sandy and clay sediment types found in shallow waters within the Transmission Assets Order Limits and a worst case scenario has been presented. A combination of burial methods are likely to be adopted, with the Outline CSIP covering all necessary techniques to allow the appropriate method to be selected based on the expected sediment density and strength, ensuring the minimum burial depth is achieved. The Outline CBRA (APP-219) was prepared by Royal HaskoningDHV who have a wealth of experience in undertaking CBRA's and the Applicants' export cable installation team have a combined experience of over 50 years installing subsea cables, including selection of the appropriate burial tools / techniques in shallow water and/ or constructing new machinery to improve the efficiency of cable burial. As set out in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022), based on the site investigation data collected to inform the environmental impact assessment and engineering design, which included borehole and cone penetration test data, the Applicants are confident of the ability to install the offshore export cables using the identified installation tools of ploughing, jetting and mechanical cutting. The Applicants would also note that these

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
				installation methods have been used successfully on numerous offshore wind farm projects around the UK. As set out in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022) and included in the updated Commitments Register at Deadline 4 (F1.3.5/F05) the Applicants have committed to micro-siting of cable routes to areas with the greatest potential for burial success and lower likelihood or requiring cable protection and made significant reductions in cable protection provisions to reflect the confidence in successful cable burial. *Application document updates for Deadline 5:* No application document updates are anticipated. **MDS for pre-lay grapnel run, boulder and UXO clearance** With regards to Natural England's comments regarding the MDS for Pre-Lay Grapnel Run (PLGR), Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) clearance and boulder clearance, the Applicants have responded to this point in full in the Applicants' response to RR.1601.B.9 (PDA-016) and RR.1601.C.14 (PDA-017), but reorganised the response below to aid in explaining the Applicants position. • The MDS for sandwave clearance footprint is 9% of the Morgan offshore export cables and 9% of the Morecambe offshore export cables with a footprint width of 60 m for Morgan offshore export cables and 48 m for Morecambe offshore export cables. • The MDS for pre-lay grapnel runs (PLGR) / boulder clearance does not include the areas where sandwave clearance has occurred as sandwave clearance would either remove the need for PLGR / boulder clearance, or those activities would occur within the disturbance footprint of sandwave clearance, i.e. sandwave clearance swathe is 60 m wide for Morgan cables and 48 m wide for Morecambe cables centred on each offshore export cable route, whilst the swathe for PLGR / boulder clearance is 20 m wide centred on each offshore export cable route. • In the event that sandwave clearance is not required and boulder clearance is required along 100% of offshore export cables, then this remains within the MDS assessed as the width of disturbance for boulder clearance is 20 m and therefore well within the width of disturbance assessed for sandwave clearance. • For the remaining 91% of the Morgan and Morecambe cables where sandwave clearance is not expected to be required, the MDS assumes repeat disturbance of the same 20 m wide swathe centred on each export cables route due to boulder clearance (by plough or grab) (PLGR and UXO clearance (if required) as set out in section 3.12.3 of the Project Description chapter (REP2-008)). Where a high density of boulders is seen, the expectation is that a boulder plough will be required to clear the installation corridor. Where medium and low densities of boulders are present, a sub-sea grab is expected to be employed. In either case, boulders will be side cast to the edge of the 20 m installation corridor.

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
				• An assessment of temporary habitat disturbance from unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance is provided in paragraph 2.11.2.37 of the Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology chapter (APP-045). Low order UXO clearance would only be attempted for UXO found lying within the 20 m wide installation corridor (or up to 48 and 60 m for sandwave clearance over 9% of the export cable route as stated above). The Benthic subtidal and intertidal assessment established that for high order clearance, craters of up to 12.61 m are likely for up to 25 UXO clearance events. However, given that the Applicants have restricted to the draft DCO (REP3-009) to low order UXO clearance, any craters generated through clearance are expected to be significantly smaller than 12.61 m. In summary, • Over 9% of the offshore export cable routes, the MDS is sandwave clearance, boulder clearance, PLGR and low order UXO clearance with sandwave clearance dictating the width of the installation corridor (up to 60 m for Morgan and 48 m for Morecambe). • Over the remaining 91% of the offshore export cable routes, boulder clearance, PLGR and low order UXO clearance dictates the width of the installation corridor which is 20 m wide for all cables. Sandwave clearance, boulder clearance, PLGR and low order UXO clearance are likely to be undertaken at different times within the construction phase, which is why the Applicants have assessed these activities in the Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology chapter (APP-045) as 'repeat disturbance', but they would still be confined temporally to the overall discrete construction phase. The Applicants therefore consider that the assessment has been undertaken in accordance with section 7.2.2 of Natural England's Best Practice Guidance Phase III, which provides advice for specific aspects of an offshore wind farm which should be considered within the application including seabed preparation. Based on this advice all necessary aspects of seabed preparation have been considered (sandwave clearance, pre-lay grapnel run, boulder clearance and UXO clearance). *Application document updates for Deadline 5:* The information above is set out in both the Project Description chapter (REP2-008) (section 3.12.3) and the Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) (section 2.9), however, the Applicants will update both chapters, and the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059) to include this additional clarification/justification. **Sandwave errata** *Application document updates for Deadline 5:* With regards to Natural England's comments regarding the errata for sandwave clearance in the Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
				Chapter (APP-045), the Applicants confirm that the relevant section of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) will be updated and submitted at Deadline 5. **Construction scenarios** With regards to Natural England's comments relating to the potential gap between Morgan and Morecambe cable installation, the Applicants have submitted Rule 9 – ES assessment of Construction Scenarios (AS-070). This document details how the construction scenario has been assessed in the Environmental Statement. *Application document updates for Deadline 5:* The Applicants confirm that the relevant sections of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) will be updated to include this information and submitted at Deadline 5. **Refinement of the MDS for cable protection** With regards to Natural England's comments relating to the refinement of the MDS for cable protection, the Applicants have responded to this point in full in the Applicants' response to RR.1601.43 (PDA-014). Details of cable protection material and volumes for the Transmission Assets are provided in sections 3.12.6 of Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description (REP2-008) with further details provided in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022). As set out under paragraph 3.1.1.12 of the Outline CSIP (REP2-022) (our emphasis added), ground conditions within the Fylde MCZ are largely sand and clay with some areas of slightly gravelly seabed. Whilst slightly gravelly clay or slightly gravelly sand sediments are currently not anticipated to hinder cable burial via the trenching techniques under consideration, more dense areas of gravel, if present, could present a risk of reduced burial, leading to the need for cable protection. Based on the initial survey results from four vibrocores / cone penetration tests (CPTs), the use of additional cable protection for ground conditions within the Fylde MCZ is not envisaged. However, due to the limited survey data used to extrapolate seabed conditions across the MCZ, isolated disparate ground conditions could still be present. As such, the MDS allows for 3% cable protection for ground conditions within the Fylde MCZ as a contingency only (CoT47 in the Commitments Register, REP3-013) should later surveys indicate discrete areas of harder seabed where cable burial to the target depth cannot be reached. For the Applicants to not include the 3% contingency would risk a delay to completion of construction to engage on a variation to the deemed marine licence(s) and thus, a potential delay to completing the project and commencing contribution to UK Government targets for renewable energy. However, the Applicants have already refined the cable protection contingency post-PEIR from 20% to 3% for the Morgan offshore export cables and from 15% to 3% for the Morecambe offshore export cables but cannot reduce this further in the absence of more detailed vibrocore / CPT data. The use of cable protection for ground conditions, where required, will be further evaluated and considered post-consent in the CSIPs, following

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
				further pre-construction surveys, which is secured through the Outline CSIP (REP2-022). The Applicants and Natural England met on 22 July 2025 to review outstanding offshore matters, with a focus on the principal areas of disagreement summary statement (PADSS). During the meeting, Natural England confirmed that subject to the Applicants setting out clear positions (above) and subject to review of updated application documents at Deadline 5, these matters are considered to be resolvable within the timeframe of the Examination. Additionally, of relevance to Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology, the Applicants also included a new commitment to benthic community recovery specific monitoring in the Fylde MCZ through pre and post construction benthic community sampling to monitor for temporal and spatial recovery within the Offshore In Principle Monitoring Plan (IPMP) at updated at Deadline 4 (J20/F03).
Q7.1.5	NE	Cables and scour protection Are you content that your request in [REP1- 093] for a commitment, secured in the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) to remove the cables and scour protection from the seabed during the decommissioning phase of the project has now been adequately addressed by the applicants in their response provided in [PDA-014], [REP2-022] and [REP2-034]?	Natural England notes the Applicant has removed the option of 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within Fylde MCZ in their updated Outline CSIP [REP2-023]. We welcome this update and agree with the Applicant that rock dump is the least recoverable type of protection. However, we highlight to the ExA that the commitments; CoT108 and CoT109 still state that any external cable protection will be designed to be removeable, the commitments do not include the action to remove cable/scour protection. Therefore, Natural England consider this issue to be progressed, but not resolved. In order to fully resolve our concerns, we continue to advise that the Applicant includes a commitment with the action to remove all on and above seabed infrastructure (including cable/scour protection with the exception of cable crossings) within benthic designated sites and that this is secured in the DCO. As a minimum, we would expect to see a commitment to not use 'rock dump' within Fylde MCZ to reflect updates the Applicant has made to the Outline CSIP.	The Applicants note Natural England's approval of the removal of 'rock dump' as a cable protection option in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022) and Project Description (REP2-008). With regard to Natural England's final point, the Applicants have updated the draft DCO submitted at Deadline 4 (C1/F06) to include no rock dump in Condition 18(e) of Schedules 14 and 15 to align with the commitment already made in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022). Regarding the requested commitment to decommissioning all infrastructure and cable protection (with the exception of cable crossings) within the Fylde MCZ, the Applicants responded previously to this point within RR-1601.42 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014). As detailed in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022), the Transmission Assets design is considering multiple cable protection options. The Outline CSIP (REP2-022) identifies that cable burial is the preferred option for cable protection where practicable (CoT54) and should cable protection be required within the Fylde MCZ, it will be designed to be removable (CoT108) with the requirement for removal agreed with stakeholders and regulators at the time of decommissioning (CoT109). The use of cable/scour protection, where required, will be evaluated and further considered post-consent in Detailed CSIPs, focusing on both engineering suitability and environmental recoverability. The CSIPs are part of the Offshore Construction Method Statements that are secured in the Draft DCO (AS-004) in: • Condition 18(1)(e)(i) of Schedule 14 for the Morgan Offshore Wind Project: Transmission Assets; and • Condition 18(1)(e)(i) of Schedule 15 for the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm: Transmission Assets. The Applicants will submit a draft decommissioning programme to the Secretary of State for approval as required by the Energy Act 2004 prior to the commencement of construction. This decommissioning programme will be updated throughout the assets' lifespan to incorporate changing best practice and new technologies. Offshore decommissioning

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
				is secured under Requirement 21 of Schedule 2A and Schedule 2B of the draft DCO (AS-004). The Applicants' position is aligned with the positions of the Morgan Generation Assets and Morecambe Generation Assets DCO applications and the recently made Orders for the Mona Offshore Wind Project and Sheringham and Dudgeon Extension Projects, the latter of which also has an export cable corridor overlapping an MCZ. The Applicants and Natural England met on 22 July 2025 to review outstanding offshore matters, with a focus on the principal areas of disagreement summary statement (PADSS), which allowed the Applicants to clarify their position regarding the removal of cable protection/scour protection from the Fylde MCZ at decommissioning during the Issue Specific Hearing on 30 July 2025. It was noted that the Applicants and Natural England are not agreed on this matter.
Q7.1.6	NE	Assessments In their D2 submission [REP2-034] the applicants are still maintaining their position that contrary to your stated position in [RR-1601] and [REP1-092] and [REP1-093] that sufficient design details have been provided on the location and design of the cables and associated protection and impacts for sediment transport pathways have been identified as being of negligible to minor significance which is not significant in EIA terms. What additional assessment/ information do you require to reach an agreement on this issue?	We highlight to the ExA our original comments we provided in our Relevant Reps [RR-1601] which relate to this question; B2, B3, B11, B17, B18, B19, B20, B21 and B23 which detail the key additional assessments and information Natural England requires for a route to resolution. We have set out the key additional assessment/information we require below for clarity: • Cable protection parameters in the nearshore: The Applicant should provide a definition of the Depth of Closure. Details of the location, volumes, orientation and type of cable protection between Lowest Astronomical Tide (LAT) and the Depth of Closure. Without this detailed information, we are unable to fully understand the impact on nearshore sediment transport processes. This was raised in our RR comments; B3, B17, B18 and is consolidated in point RI_B3 of our R&I Log. If the Applicant provided this information and updated in the relevant documents, it could contribute to resolving these issues. • Modelling: If the Applicant is unable to provide further information at this stage on the detail around location and design of cable protection, we advise that numerical modelling, rather than conceptual modelling is undertaken to inform this detail. We highlight our original comment in our Relevant Reps (ref: B13). Due to limited evidence to support the Applicant 's assessment this issue has now been updated to an Amber risk and included within our R&I log at Deadline 3 and upgraded the comment to Amber. • Mitigation: We continue to advise that commitments are made and secured in the DCO/dMLs to minimise/mitigate impacts of cable protection on nearshore sediment transport processes. This was raised in our RR comments; B3, B17, B18, B20 and is included in points RI_B3 and RI_B14 of our R&I Log. We also note the Applicant's response in ([PDA-016], 1601.B.18) and highlight that this response misquotes one of the Applicant's commitments: "CoT47 states that no foreign material will be placed on the bed's surface in the inter-tidal region and low profile/tapered armouring would be employed in shallow water should this be required." This differs to the wording provided for CoT47 in the Applicant's Commitment Register	The Applicants have responded to each of the points made by NE below. Additionally, under each point, any updates required to application documents at Deadline 5 is set out to ensure that Natural England and the Examining Authority are aware of what updates will be provided at Deadline 5, where relevant. **Cable protection parameters in the nearshore** The Outline CBRA (APP-219) details sub-seabed geology and ground conditions and Depth of Lowering (burial depth) for cable burial along the full length of the cable corridor. The first section presented is the Export Cable Landing Section (KP0 – KP13.25) which extends from the Transition Joint Bays (TJBs) onshore out to a distance of 13.25 km offshore at a depth 14.23m chart datum (CD) and incorporates Depth of Closure (DoC) which is circa 10 m CD. Offshore of the DoC sediment transport is dominated by tidal currents (i.e. onshore transport with sediment supply to the shoreline from offshore) and inshore of DoC the sediment transport is also influenced by metrological conditions (i.e. wave climate / littoral currents). This drives longshore and cross-shore transport and provides the sediment source for the Ribble Estuary SPA, a key concern raised by Natural England in their representations and highlighted during a meeting on the 22 July 2025. The information from the Outline CBRA indicates, from Lowest Astronomical Tide (LAT) to DoC, geological conditions are suitable for trenching to required depth, as discussed above by the Applicant in response to 7.1.4 and 7.1.5 . Cable crossings are located further offshore beyond the DoC therefore within this region (LAT to DoC) cable burial will be undertaken. The Outline CSIP (REP2-022) confirms that due to the sediment type found in the nearshore area and Fylde MCZ (i.e. predominantly sand and mud), traditional burial techniques are suitable to achieve the target burial depths and commitment CoT54 (REP3-013) identifies that cable burial is the preferred option for cable protection where practicable. It is therefore not anticipated that external cable protection would be required in the nearshore and this is to be confirmed by pre-construction surveys.

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
			[REP2-011] which relates to cable protection and sandwave clearance within Fylde MCZ. • Monitoring: We continue to advise the Applicant to include a commitment to carry out monitoring of; sandwave recovery (particularly within Fylde MCZ) and dune/beach/intertidal morphology. These should be included for consideration in the Offshore In-Principal Monitoring Plan (OIPMP). Please also see point RI_B17 of our R&I Log.	However, in the unlikely event that burial to the target depth is not achievable, commitment CoT45 (REP3-013) states that cable protection will be tailored to the specific location and installed to limit change in water depth to no more than 5% (referenced to Chart Datum). The 5% limitation is secured in the draft DCO (REP3-009) under Condition 18(e) of Schedule 14 and 15. Whilst the basis of this limitation, which has been standard in DCOs for many years, is to maintain sufficient under-keel clearance of vessels to minimise the risk of vessel fouling, its applicability to minimising the potential for effects on physical processes and other environmental receptors is valid. In practical terms the 5% limitation means that in 10 m water depth, cable protection, if required, cannot exceed 0.5 m and in 5m water depth, this is reduced to 0.25 m. At water depths of less than 5 m, the potential for any cable protection is effectively none. Additionally, the Outline CSIP (REP2-022) states that, should cable protection be required in shallow water, protection will be sufficiently low profile/tapped to cause minimal changes to wave, tide and sediment transport. In practice this would entail the use of tapered mattress units, typically 0.3m in height, which are specifically designed to allow sediment transport to continue unhindered and sediment sources and sediment transport into the Ribble Estuary would not be impacted by the presence of this infrastructure. *Application document updates for Deadline 5:* The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical Process (APP-042) for submission at Deadline 5 to capture this information. The Applicants therefore consider that this provides sufficient detail on the location and design of the cables and associated protection to determine that impacts for sediment transport pathways, including the pathway into the Ribble Estuary, are of negligible to minor significance which is not significant in EIA terms. The Applicants consider that information provided on the detail around location and design of cable protection is appropriate support the conclusions of the environmental assessment and this will be captured in the updated Chapter 1: Physical Process (APP-042) for submission at Deadline 5. **Modelling** In this case detailed numerical modelling would not be required (see further explanation below). The Applicants also note that the conceptual approach was supported by a number of appropriate studies and modelling campaigns including but not limited to: • Detailed project specific morphological seabed study (included assessment of historical datasets and modelling (ABPmer 2023) • Morgan Generation Assets (which included modelling of cable protection & crossings) • Mona Offshore Wind Project • Awel y Môr Offshore Windfarm

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
				The Applicants have submitted the ABPmer report (Annex to Applicants response to MMO and NE submission at Deadline 3: Assessment of Seabed Level Vertical Variability for Morgan Offshore Wind Farm - Appendix C) regarding the beach levels that underpin the assessment of the intertidal bed level trends (S_D4_19) to support the information provided in the Outline CBRA (APP-219) and the Outline CSIP (REP2-022) and the coastal processes assessment presented in Chapter 1: Physical Process (APP-042) which noted the limited requirement for cable protection and included this in the assessment (section 1.10.3). Further detail on this matter will also be included in the update to the Physical Processes chapter to be submitted at Deadline 5. With specific reference to undertaking detailed numerical modelling, the impacts of cable protection in the nearshore on sediment transport will be of very limited magnitude, such that modelling would not be applicable. For example, a water depth of 5 m to Chart Datum cable protection would be limited to 250 mm above bed level. This order of magnitude of bed level change, even within the context of the detailed model area, would be sufficiently small that the impacts on coastal processes would not be discernible in the model output. Numerical models simulate tidal flow and wave climates using iterative techniques where mass and momentum are balanced across the model domain until the result falls within a tolerance and model closure is reached. When models which are very similar to one another, but not identical, such as when a very small change in bathymetry is applied in a small region of the model, the difference between the two sets of results due to the change in bathymetry is in the same order of magnitude as that related to model closure. The application of modelling would therefore not be appropriate in this case. The Applicants reiterate that the designed-in measures (the 5% limitation and use of low profile / tapered cable protection) outlined above provides sufficient detail on the location and design of the cables and associated protection to determine that impacts for sediment transport pathways are of negligible to minor significance which is not significant in EIA terms and the sediment transport in the Ribble Estuary SPA will not be negatively impacted. These measures are secured in a range of commitments (REP3-013) and plans (APP-219), (REP2-022), secured within the DCO as outlined above, principally; • CoT54: stating cable burial is the preferred option • CoT134: micro-siting of cable routes to areas with the greatest potential for burial success and lower likelihood or requiring cable protection (new commitment made at Deadline 4 in the Commitments Register F1.5.3/F05) • CoT45 and the draft DCO: limiting change in water depth to no more than 5% • Outline CSIP: shallow water protection will be sufficiently low profile/tapped • CoT49: CMS and installation plan – to provide detailed information on cable protection Furthermore, commitment CoT114 (REP3-013) states that all permanent infrastructure located between MLWS and MHWS will be buried to a target depth of 3 metres, subject to further pre-construction surveys to be reported within Detailed CBRAs. Moreover, a new commitment has been

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
				included to the Commitments Register at Deadline 4 stating that "no cable/scour protection shall be permanently deployed in the intertidal area between MLWS and MHWS" (see CoT133, F1.5.3/F05). *Application document updates for Deadline 5:* Update to the Physical Processes chapter (APP-042) to include the new commitment CoT134 made at Deadline 4 and described above and updates to the chapter to support the conceptual approach as set out above. **Monitoring** It is noted that the Applicants are already committed to monitoring to observe the effect of sediment transport and sediment transport pathways on cable burial and ensure that cables remain buried and adequately protected, as detailed in the Offshore IPMP (REP3-032). This would therefore encompass areas where sandwave clearance has been undertaken and morphological changes may occur. With regard to the intertidal area, it is also noted that a further commitment has been made by the Applicants at Deadline 4 stating that no cable/scour protection shall be permanently deployed in the intertidal area between MLWS and MHWS (CoT133, in the updated Commitments Register (F1.5.3/F05). Therefore, there will be no influence on coastal processes in the intertidal area and no need for monitoring at this location. *Application document updates for Deadline 5:* Update to the Physical Processes chapter (APP-042) to include the new commitment CoT133 made at Deadline 4 and described above. The Applicants and Natural England met on 22 July 2025 to review outstanding offshore matters, with a focus on the principal areas of disagreement summary statement (PADSS). During the meeting, Natural England confirmed that subject to the Applicants setting out clear positions (above) and subject to review of updated application documents at Deadline 5, these matters are considered to be resolvable within the timeframe of the Examination.
Q7.1.7	NE	NERC priority habitats In their D2 submission [REP2-034] the applicants are still maintaining their position that contrary to your stated position in [RR- 1601] and [REP1-092 and REP1-093] impacts on benthic receptors have been mitigated and NERC habitats considered. What additional assessment/ information do you require to reach an agreement on this issue?	Natural England advises to reach resolution on this matter, we continue to advise that the Applicant includes commitments to avoid the most sensitive and/or Priority habitats designated under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. We highlight to the ExA that the Applicant has not provided any further proposals to include this mitigation in the DCO/dML in their rebuttal documents [PDA-014], [PDA-017] and [REP2-034], therefore our original comments are still relevant. Once the Applicant has secured commitments to avoid Priority habitats under Section 41 of the NERC Act where possible. And if not	The Applicants have responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.44 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014) and RR-1601.C.4 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017). During a meeting between the Applicants and Natural England on 22 July 2025, this matter was discussed, where the Applicants explained their position that a commitment to avoid the most sensitive and or priority habitats designated under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 was not justified or required due to the Applicants having taken all reasonable measures (via project design changes and commitments) to minimise impacts to all benthic habitats, including habitats of principal importance.

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
			possible clearly demonstrated how impacts will be minimised, this issue can be readily resolved.	Natural England advised the Applicant to set out its case clearly demonstrating how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied and the commitments made, which the Applicants have set out below. **Avoid** The avoid principle (i.e. the first step in the mitigation hierarchy) was first applied through the Offshore Export Cable Corridor routing exercise which sought to identify the shortest route from the Generation Assets to the selected landfall location at Lytham St Annes, whilst avoiding environmental sensitivities, such as MCZs and SACs, as well as third-party/existing seabed users. The Offshore Export Cable Corridor routing exercise was driven by consideration of the guiding principles described in Volume 1, Chapter 4: Site Selection and Consideration of Alternatives of the ES (APP-030) and The Crown Estate (TCE) Cable Route Protocol (TCE, 2021). The Offshore Export Cable Corridor search area was defined to minimise interaction with designated sites, avoiding the Shell Flat and Lune Deep SAC and the West of Walney MCZ and West of Copeland MZC to the north. The Fylde MCZ could not, however, be avoided entirely due to its north-south extent between the Generation Assets and the point of interconnection at Penwortham. Routing around the Fylde MCZ to reach landfall location at Lytham St Anne's was not feasible due to the existing cables that run east/west through the MCZ which would need to be crossed in the shallow waters between the east edge of the MCZ and the coast. **Reduce / minimise** The reduce/minimise principle (i.e. the second step on the mitigation hierarchy) was then applied. As outlined in Volume 1, Chapter 4: Site Selection and Consideration of Alternatives of the ES (APP-030), the final offshore export cable route was designed to cross the Fylde MCZ where it is narrowest (i.e. to reduce impacts). Refinements were also made to the project description (Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description of the ES (REP2-008) post-PEIR to significantly reduce the extent of long term habitat loss and temporary habitat disturbance within the Fylde MCZ as follows. • Post-PEIR, the MDS for cable protection outside the Fylde MCZ required for ground conditions was reduced from 20% to 10% for the Morgan offshore export cables and from 15% to 10% for the Morecambe offshore export cables. • Post-PEIR, the MDS for cable protection in the Fylde MCZ required for ground conditions was reduced from 20% to 3% contingency for the Morgan offshore export cables and from 15% to 3% contingency for the Morecambe offshore export cables. • Post-PEIR, the proportion of cables outside the Fylde MCZ requiring sandwave clearance was reduced from 60% to 9% for the Morgan offshore export cables and 30% to 9% for the Morecambe offshore export cables. • Post-PEIR, the proportion of cables within the Fylde MCZ requiring sandwave clearance was reduced from 60% to 5% for the Morgan offshore export cables and 30% to 5% for the Morecambe offshore export cables. • Post-PEIR the width of disturbance associated with sandwave clearance was reduced from 104 m to 60 m for the Morgan

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
				offshore export cables and from 104 m to 48 m for the Morecambe offshore export cables. • Post-PEIR the width of disturbance associated with boulder clearance for the Morecambe offshore export cables was reduced from 25 m to 20 m. • Post-PEIR the offshore substation platforms (OSPs) and interconnector cables were removed from the project design. • Post-PEIR, the requirement for a Morgan Offshore Booster Station was removed from the project design. • Post-PEIR the MDS for the total length of offshore export cables within the Fylde MCZ has reduced from 94.8 km to 88 km (i.e. 16 km for each of the four Morgan offshore export cables and 12 km for each of the two Morecambe offshore export cables) as a result of further design and route identification. • Post-PEIR the MDS for the volume of spoil arising from sandwave clearance within the Fylde MCZ has reduced from 1,268,642 m3 (previously calculated as a proportion of the overall spoil generated for the Transmission Assets) to 270,000 m3. The offshore export cable route was designed to minimise the number of crossings with existing cables, and therefore long term habitat loss, within the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants attempted to move the crossings outwith the Fylde MCZ, however they were limited by existing infrastructure (i.e. Hibernia Atlantic telecoms cable which runs north west/south east to the west of the Transmission Assets just outside of the Fylde MCZ) and engineering constraints (e.g. the need to cross the Lanis 1 and Havhingsten telecoms cable at a 90 degree angle). As such, whilst the Morecambe offshore export cable crossings were able to be pushed westward beyond the boundary of the MCZ (i.e. no cable crossings are required for the Morecambe offshore export cables within the Fylde MCZ), the Morgan offshore export cables would need to cross the Lanis 1 cable within the Fylde MCZ. Therefore, the Applicants have sought to reduce the parameters of the crossing, such as length which was reduced from 20% to 3% contingency for the Morgan offshore export cables and from 15% to 3% contingency for the Morecambe offshore export cables , to minimise its impact. In addition to changes made to the project design to minimise impacts, the Applicants have also committed to a number measures to further reduce impacts to benthic habitats, including NERC priority habitats, as follows: • CoT45: ensure that no more than 5% reduction in water depth (referenced to Chart Datum) will occur at any point on the offshore export cable corridor route without prior written approval from the licensing authority. • CoT47: limits the extent of cable protection to 3% of the offshore export cable route within the Fylde MCZ (excluding cable crossings) and sandwave clearance up to 5% of the offshore export cable route within the Fylde MCZ. Material arising from sandwave clearance in the Fylde MCZ will be deposited within the Fylde MCZ. • CoT108: commits the Applicants to ensuring cable protection installed in the Fylde MCZ is designed to be removable

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
				• CoT109: outlines the requirement for removal in the Fylde MCZ to be agreed with stakeholders and regulators at the time of decommissioning. • CoT114: requires that all permanent infrastructure located between MLWS and MHWS will be buried to a target depth of 3 m. • CoT116: ensures that material arising from sandwave clearance will be deposited in close proximity to the works. • CoT117: No walking jack-ups within the Fylde MCZ. Additionally the following new commitments have been made at Deadline 4: • The draft DCO (C1/F06) has been updated to include 'no rock dumping within Fylde MCZ' under condition 18(e) of Schedules 14 and 15. • Secured commitment (in the Commitments Register) that "No cable/scour protection shall be permanently deployed in the intertidal area between Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) and Mean High Water Springs (MHWS)." (see CoT133, F1.5.3/F05).. • Secured commitment (in the Commitments Register) that *"As part of the detailed design process, micro-siting of the offshore export cables within the offshore export cable corridors will be considered where successful burial could pose a challenge or where a higher risk of remedial works such as external cable protection may be required.""* (see CoT134, F1.5.3/F05). All benthic IEFs, including those identified as habitats of principal importance in England listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006, have been fully assessed in relation to the impacts of the Transmission Assets in section 2.11 of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP -045). This assessment concluded that all benthic subtidal IEFs will recover following construction activities. Having incorporated the embedded mitigation and commitments, together with the predicted recovery of the benthic subtidal IEFS, the benthic ecology assessment presented in Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP -045) and the physical processes assessment presented in Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical processes (APP-042) concluded no likely significant impacts. The Applicants consider that they have taken all reasonable measures (via project design changes and commitments) to minimise impacts to all benthic habitats, including habitats of principal importance in England listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. The Applicants do not, therefore, consider that further mitigation to avoid these habitats is justified or required. Further, the Applicants do not consider that there is precedent in the offshore wind industry, or other offshore industries, for avoiding the sedimentary habitats recorded within the Transmission Assets and neither would it possible to do so given their widespread distribution within the benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology study area. The Applicants also highlight that biogenic or geogenic reef features were not identified as present within the site-specific surveys (section 2.6.3, Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045)). *Application document updates for Deadline 5:*

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
				Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) and Volume 1, Chapter 1: Physical Processes (APP-042) will be updated to include the new commitments made at Deadline 4 and set out above.
Q7.1.8	NE	MCZ assessment While still maintaining that Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) are not required, the applicants have submitted a Stage 2 MCZ assessment and a "without prejudice" MEEB case for the Fylde MCZ [REP1-059]. Please provide your comments and indicate whether you are satisfied with the assessment and case.	Natural England has provided detailed comments on the Applicant's Stage 2 MCZ assessment and without prejudice MEEB case for Fylde MCZ at Deadline 2 as outlined in our Appendix J2 [REP2-063]. We highlight that Natural England still does not agree with the Applicant's position which states that the conservation objectives of Fylde MCZ will not be hindered. However, if the SoS determines that MEEB is required Natural England and the Applicant agree on progressing with the strategic compensation approach for this project.	The Applicants note that there is not yet agreement between Natural England and the Applicants with respect to the conclusions of the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019). The Applicants are however pleased to note that Natural England are in agreement with progressing with the strategic compensation approach if the Secretary of State determines that measures of equivalent environmental benefit (MEEB) for the Fylde MCZ are required for the Transmission Assets. The Applicants have submitted the Without Prejudice Benthic Compensation DCO Schedule at Deadline 3 (REP3-066) that could be included in the DCO should the Secretary of State deem that benthic compensation was required. The drafting of REP3-066 would secure the relevant measures set out in the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059). The Applicants had regard to the wording provided by Natural England when drafting the without prejudice schedule. The Applicants have also updated the Commitments Register at Deadline 4 (see CoT136, F1.5.3/F05 to include a clear commitment that, should benthic compensation be required, the Marine Recovery Fund (MRF) will be the preferred and prioritised option and the project-led options would only be considered where the MRF option is not made available to the Applicants.
7.2 Fish and shellfish ecology				
Q7.2.2	NE	Assessments In their D2 submission [REP2-034] the applicants are still maintaining their position that contrary to your stated position in [RR- 1601] and [REP1-092 and REP1-093] the potential loss of prey specifies has been adequately addressed. What additional assessment/ information do you require to reach an agreement on this issue?	Natural England agrees with the Applicant's conclusions and reasoning stated in PDA-014, RR-1601, 1601.46 and does not require any further assessment/information regarding this issue.	The Applicants welcome the agreement from Natural England.
Q7.2.3	NE	Electro-magnetic fields The Examining Authority raised the issue of the potential for electro-magnetic fields to cause barrier effects that hinder smelt movements in and out of the Ribble Estuary with the applicants during issue specific hearing 1. The applicants maintained that the evidence provided to date is sufficient to screen out this concern paragraph 49 of [REP1-035]. The minimum depth of cable below the estuary would be 6 metres and electro-magnetic field effects are generally localised within 1 to 2 metres of the cable. The applicants also referenced their response to the Environment Agency's [RR-677] [PDA-010] in this regard.	A great deal of uncertainty remains with regard to electro-magnetic fields (EMF) and smelt behaviour. The evidence and proposed guidelines provided by the Applicant relating to potential EMF impacts, namely International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) and Government voluntary Code of Practice on EMF public exposure, relates to human health and public exposure to EMF, not impacts on smelt behaviour. The Applicant also states in section 3.11.7.14 of Volume 2, Chapter 3: Fish and shellfish ecology (APP-048) that the effects of EMFs surrounding undersea cables on European smelt are poorly researched, with recommendations made to investigate potential impacts in future. Natural England agrees with this point. Natural England equally welcome the Applicant's approach to increase cable depth as mitigation, but the lack of direct evidence	The Applicants acknowledge the uncertainties associated with electromagnetic field impacts on fish behaviour, including smelt. However, little uncertainty exists concerning the physical dissipation of EMFs with increasing distance from the cable, as set out in section 3.11.7 of Volume 2, Chapter 3: Fish and shellfish ecology (APP-048). As the cables under the Ribble Estuary will be buried to depths of 7-45 m, there will be no detectable EMF emissions into the Ribble Estuary (beyond natural background levels). Therefore, any proposed monitoring of EMFs would not be proportionate to the negligible risk of EMF emissions causing barrier effects to smelt at the Ribble Estuary crossing. The Applicants would also note that the MMO and the Environment Agency have confirmed they have no concerns with respect to effects of

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
		a) Based on this response are you content that this issue has now been addressed? If not what further assessment/ information do you require to reach a conclusion?	relating to potential EMF impacts on smelt remains a concern. Natural England advises monitoring of EMF levels be conducted where cables are laid under the Ribble estuary to provide direct evidence.	EMF from the Ribble Estuary crossing on smelt (see REP1-086 and REP1-076, respectively).
7.3 Marine Mammals				
Q7.3.1	NE	UXO clearance The applicants have amended the dDCO [REP2-004] to include only for the removal of low order UXO clearance in the DMLs. The removal of high order UXO would be the subject of a standalone licence. Do the amendments to the DMLs address your concerns regarding UXO clearance?	Natural England welcomes the removal of high order UXO detonations from the DCO and the outline MMMP submitted at D2 [REP2-027]. However Natural England maintains its position that UXO detonation should be subject to a separate marine licence post consent, regardless of whether the removal is low or high order.	The Applicants note the comment and the position taken by Natural England on this point, however it is the Applicants' position that it is appropriate and justified to include UXO clearance (limited to low order clearance) activities within the draft DCO (REP3-009). The Applicants have included all necessary activities for the construction and operation and maintenance of the Transmission Assets in the application for development consent, to ensure a comprehensive application, and all such activities have been subject to a robust assessment process. This includes UXO clearance activities, with suitable mitigation secured (Outline Marine Mammal Mitigation Protocol (REP2-026) and a commitment to not clearing UXO within the Liverpool Bay SPA between Nov – Mar (inclusive) as set out under CoT130 in Commitments Register (REP3-013)). Including only low order UXO clearance activities within the draft DCO, and appropriate controls under Condition 20 of Schedule 14 and 15 (REP3-009), is intended to remove the need to apply for and obtain a further licence post-consent and prior to construction, assisting with the expeditious delivery of the Transmission Assets project, contributing to UK Government targets for Net Zero. This is consistent with the approach taken for the Morgan Generation project and the recently consented Mona Offshore Wind Project..
7.4 Offshore Ornithology				
Q7.4.3	NE	Seasonal restrictions Are you satisfied that the applicants' D2 response [REP2-034] has adequately addressed your concerns on the potential adverse effect of the proposed development on site integrity for the red-throated diver and common scoter features of the Liverpool SPA and your request for a full restriction on construction activities from November to March [REP1-093]? If not what further assessment/ information do you require to reach a conclusion on the issue?	The Applicant has now committed to a restriction on all construction activity and UXO clearance from November to March (inclusive) within the original Liverpool Bay SPA boundary plus a 2km buffer [REP2-025]. Therefore, we can confirm this adequately addresses Natural England's concerns and request for a full restriction on construction. AEoI can now be ruled out for the red-throated diver and common scoter features of Liverpool Bay SPA.	The Applicants welcome the resolution of this issue at Deadline 3. Additionally, the Applicants highlight that a new commitment has been made at Deadline 4 stating that *"The Applicants will not plan routine O&M activities in the original Liverpool Bay SPA (as designated in 2010), including a 2 km buffer between November and March (inclusive) unless in urgent circumstances."* (see CoT135 in the updated Commitments Register (F1.5.3/F05))
8. Geology, hydrogeology and ground conditions				
Q8.1.1 & Q8.1.2	The applicants (a- d), NE, Environment Agency (EA), Lancashire County Council (LCC), MMO (e)	Commitments CoT119 [REP2-010] states: "Subject to landowner approval, at detailed design stage, hydrogeological risk assessment(s) will be undertaken at St Annes Old Links Golf Club (abstraction borehole ref: GWA_01), if necessary. The hydrogeological risk assessment(s) would be informed by ground investigation information, where relevant and practicable. If undertaken, the risk assessment(s) will inform a detailed site- specific crossing	Further information to provide context to the ExA question please see Appendix G3 at Deadline 3. We reiterate that best endeavours should be made to provide this data to inform the examination/determination period for this project.	Further ground investigations would not be taken until after Examination/Determination. Therefore, it will not be possible to provide this information during examination. The hydrogeological risk assessment(s) in regards to St Annes Old Links Golf Club abstraction borehole would only be undertaken with the approval of the landowner. The need to undertake hydrogeological risk assessment(s) at St Anne's Old Links Golf Club will be dependent on the dewatering rates associated with the construction of the TJB which will be confirmed during detailed

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
		design for the installation of the offshore export cables beneath Lytham St Annes SSSI and the St Annes Old Links Golf Course." a) Provide an update in relation to gaining landowner approval. As the condition states "if necessary" under what circumstances would the hydrogeological risk assessment not be considered necessary? In an event of not obtaining the landowners approval how will the hydrogeological risk assessment be informed? What does "where relevant and practical" mean in the context of assessing risks to Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI? Do you have any comments if hydrological risk assessment can't be conducted at St Annes Old Links Golf Club. How could that impact production of a detailed site-specific crossing design for the installation of the offshore export cables beneath Lytham St Annes SSSI and the St Annes Old Links Golf Course?	This point is also captured in the R&I Log – RI_G1 response at Deadline 3 (Appendix K3). (d) The current wording regarding the use of ground investigation information is considered to be inadequate specifically around the inclusion of "where necessary and practical" which leads to ambiguity of whether suitable data will be collected and used to inform the Hydrological Risk Assessment. Ground investigations to determine the position of the water table and to record potential fluctuations that may occur as a result of the project are considered necessary to provide sufficient information to determine impacts and to identify appropriate mitigation measures. We have previously also suggested to the Applicant the use of dipwells with dataloggers be installed before construction (which could inform the Hydrological Risk Assessment) and left in-situ during the cable installation. These dataloggers would record potential changes over a longer time period and inform mitigation. Please refer to R1_G1 (R&I Log, Appendix K3).	design and therefore it may not be necessary to carry out further ground investigation. (d) The Applicants provided a response to this point at Deadline 3 in Applicants' Response to WRs from Statutory Consultees: Fylde Council - Rev F01 (REP2-053). The Applicants position remains unchanged and is repeated here for clarity. "Relevant" means where the potential risk remains likely and significant following detailed design, so as to require Hydrogeological Risk Assessment(s) to be undertaken. "Where practical" means that the acquisition of additional evidence and data to support such risk assessments is achievable. For example, the hydrogeological risk assessment(s) in regard to St Annes Old Links Golf Club abstraction borehole would only be undertaken with the approval of the landowner. The scope and methodology of the risk assessment may also require information that is not practical, i.e., drilling a borehole on a protected site deemed too sensitive to be exposed to such impact, or on land that there are no agreed access arrangements in place. With regard to monitoring, Natural England raised within their relevant representations (RR-1601.G) and Appendix K1 – Risk and issues log (REP1-093) the need for the consideration of dipwells (automatic dataloggers) to monitor the position of the water table pre- and post-construction. The Applicants response RR-1601.G.1 in Annex 3.2.14 to Response to RR: Natural England (RR-1601)- Appendix G (Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation) (PDA-021) and RI_G1 in Applicants' Response to WRs: Response to Natural England's Risk and Issues Log - Rev F01 (REP2-034) on these monitoring measures remain unchanged. I.e. that the monitoring the need for dipwells (automatic dataloggers) to monitor the position of the water table pre- and post-construction would be determined as part of the detailed hydrological risk assessments post consent.
	The applicants (a- d), NE, EA (d)	Commitments CoT128 [REP2-010] states: "A Preliminary Hydrogeological Risk Assessment will be prepared in relation to the crossing of Lytham St Annes SSSI to mitigate potential impacts to the hydrologically dependant surface water features of the sand dune system. This will form part of the Outline Code of Construction Practice. At detailed design stage, Hydrogeological Risk Assessment will be developed in accordance with the Preliminary Hydrogeological Risk Assessment. The hydrogeological risk assessment(s) will be informed by ground investigation information, where necessary and practicable. These assessment(s) will used to inform the detailed site-specific crossing design for the installation of the offshore export cables beneath Lytham St Annes SSSI." a) Explain "where necessary and practicable "in the context of ground investigation required to inform hydrological risk assessment. b) What if the ground investigation is not "practicable" to conduct. c) Under what circumstances would the ground investigation not be considered necessary and how would the hydrogeological risk assessment be informed? d) Do you consider the proposed wording to be adequate?		

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
Q8.1.3	The applicants (a- b), NE, EA, LCC, MMO (c)	Commitments CoT118 [REP2-010] states: "Where areas of potentially significant contamination (e.g. landfills) cannot be avoided within the Transmission Assets Order Limits, ground investigation or other appropriate measures (e.g. use Personal Protective Equipment and/or hazard signage) will be implemented to mitigate potential impacts to, or effects on sensitive receptors. Where ground investigation identifies potential risks to sensitive receptors from contamination, a remediation strategy would be prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency." a) Explain what process will be followed when deciding if ground investigation is required or if other appropriate measures are sufficient? b) What specific ground investigation measures is the applicant committing to in areas of potentially significant contamination? c) Is this commitment sufficient to ensure contaminated land risks are adequately managed?	Natural England defer to the Environment Agency on matters relating to ground contamination.	The Applicants note this comment.
9. Habitats Regulations Assessment 9.1 General				
Q9.1.1	Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Natural England (NE), Natural Resources Wales (NRW), NatureScot, Northern Ireland Environment Agency	Conclusions Do you agree with the applicants' Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) conclusions with respect to likely significant effects (LSE) [APP-018] and adverse effects on site integrity [APP-016 and APP-017]? Please specify the relevant sites, pathways and qualifying features in your response.	Natural England has provided comments on the Applicant's HRA throughout our Relevant Reps [RR-1601]. Below we set out the following key issues from our PADSS in relation to the Applicant's HRA, along with an update on progression at Deadline 3. Several of these points have now been resolved since our initial comments, therefore we have included a status update at the end of each point in bold: • NE11: No assessment of long-term loss of habitat supporting prey species for the offshore ornithological features of Liverpool Bay Special Protection Area (SPA). Progressed but not resolved, NE is satisfied that the Applicant's explanation provided in [PDA-014] is sufficient to rule out an AEoI. Once the information is included in updated application documents this issue will be resolved. • NE12: Assessment and conclusion of no adverse effect on site integrity for the red-throated diver and common scoter features of	The Applicants respond to each of the key issues highlighted in Natural England's Response, below: • NE11: The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement with the explanation in [PDA-014] and welcomes the decision to resolve this issue following updates to application documents. These will be updated for Deadline 5. • NE12: The Applicants welcome the decision to resolve this issue at Deadline 3. The Applicants also highlight that a new commitment has been made at Deadline 4 stating that "The Applicants will not plan routine O&M activities in the original Liverpool Bay SPA (as designated in 2010), including a 2 km buffer between November and March (inclusive) unless in urgent circumstances." (see CoT135, F1.5.3/F05) • NE18, NE19 and NE20: The Applicants welcome the decision to resolve this issue for non-breeding waterbirds at Deadline 3. The

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
			Liverpool Bay SPA . Resolved at Deadline 3 due to inclusion on seasonal restriction. • NE18: Impacts to Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site intertidal waterbirds due to the landfall works. Resolved at Deadline 3 for non-breeding waterbirds due to inclusion of seasonal restriction; progressed but not resolved for passage waterbirds. • NE19: Lack of an in-principle derogations case for impacts to intertidal SPA/Ramsar site waterbirds. Resolved at Deadline 3 for non-breeding waterbirds, not resolved for passage waterbirds. • NE20: Impacts to Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar terrestrial waterbirds. Progressed but not resolved. Please see Appendix K3 R&I Log, PADSS tab for further detailed comments.	comments are noted regarding terrestrial waterbirds and birds during the passage period and the Applicants are working with Natural England to resolve this outstanding concern and have submitted a Technical note regarding terrestrial waterbirds at DL4 (S_D4_17) .
Q9.1.2	NE	Construction scenarios The applicants, in response [AS-070] to the Rule 9 letter [PD-005], and at deadline 1 [REP1-060] have provided a requested summary of the multiple construction scenarios, including the potential for a gap of up to 4 years between construction phases, resulting in a total construction phase of up to 11 years. The Examining Authority (ExA) notes a number of entries in your relevant representation [RR-1601] relating to construction scenarios. Can you confirm if you consider whether there are any implications for the conclusions of the HRA from the applicants' approach of allowing multiple construction scenarios?	Whilst Natural England maintains its position as raised in RI_B5 and RI_C7, (Appendix K3 – Risk and Issues Log) we have not previously raised this issue of having implications for the HRA.	The Applicants note this response.
9.2 Screening				
Q9.2.1	The applicants and NE	Fish and Shellfish Table 1.1 of the HRA Screening [APP-018] details the consultation undertaken with NE and notes that NE requested that sites with shad as an Annex II qualifying feature should be screened in for further assessment. However, the HRA screening and subsequent ISAA part 2 [APP-016] do not appear to screen this species into the assessment of Adverse Effect on Integrity. (Applicants) Provide further information as to why an assessment of shad is not required in the ISAA part 2 [APP-016]. (NE) Provide your current position on the applicants' conclusion of no Likely Significant Effect to shad.	Shad are highly mobile migratory fish species, known to be regionally present and likely to move through the Zone of Influence (ZOI) on a seasonal basis. Given the highly mobile nature of shad, Natural England do not agree with the conclusion of no LSE to shad based on distance from a protected site and potential impacts to shad should be assessed in line with other Annex II diadromous fish species.	Natural England state that the approach in the LSE screening for shad should be undertaken in line with other Annex II diadromous species. The approach in the HRA Stage 1 Screening Report (APP-018) is consistent across all Annex II diadromous species, including shad. Shad SACs were screened out on the basis of the extremely large distance between the project and the relevant SAC (the nearest SAC for shad species is the Pembrokeshire Marine/ Sir Benfro Forol SAC, designated for both Allis shad Alosa alosa and Twaite shad Alosa fallax, which is located approximately 239km from the Offshore Order Limits (see paragraph 1.4.3.8 of the HRA Stage 1 Screening Report; APP-018). This is consistent with the Morgan Generation Assets LSE Screening where effects of piling will result in effects over a much wider scale than effects from the Transmission Assets.

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
Q9.2.3	NE	Offshore Ornithology Do you agree with the applicant's screening conclusions pertaining to offshore ornithology, alone and in-combination (presented at section 1.5.5 of [APP-018])?	As noted in Natural England's Relevant Representations [RR-1601], in section 1.5.5 of [APP-018] the Applicant did not consider potential long-term loss of habitat supporting prey species (due to scour/cable protection) as an impact pathway for likely significant effect (LSE) on the offshore ornithological features of Liverpool Bay SPA. Natural England advised that this impact pathway should be considered for screening. In the Applicant's response to NE's Relevant Representations [PDA-014], they explained that the total area of potential habitat loss is considered small enough to rule out this impact pathway. Natural England are satisfied that the additional information on the predicted habitat loss in PDA-014 would allow adverse effects on the Liverpool Bay SPA to be ruled out. To fully resolve the issue, we recommend that this information is used to update the relevant parts of the application, in particular the Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment (ISAA). Natural England agrees with the Applicant's conclusions regarding the other LSE pathways considered.	The Applicants welcome the decision to resolve this issue at Deadline 3 and the relevant documents (HRA Stage 2 Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment Part Three (APP-017) and Volume 2, Chapter 5: Offshore Ornithology (APP-053)) will be updated for Deadline 5.
Q9.2.9	The applicants, NE	Onshore ecology Environmental Statement (ES) Chapter 3: Onshore ecology and nature conservation [APP-075] states that the Sefton Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is 8.63km from the order limits. However, the site is not included in the HRA Screening Report. Given the proximity, can the applicants confirm why they have not included an assessment of LSE to Sefton Coast SAC. Can NE confirm if it considers there is the potential for LSE to this site?	Natural England confirms that based on the information provided by the Applicant, there are no impact pathways that would result in a Likely Significant Effect (LSE) to features of Sefton Coast SAC and that this can be screened out from further assessment. In terms of coastal habitats (saltmarsh and sand dunes) listed on the SAC citation, there are no impact pathways from the proposed development that may result in direct/ indirect harm on these features due to the distance from the development and the use of trenchless techniques at landfall. We note that great crested newts (Triturus cristatus) are a notified feature of the SAC. We would not consider any great crested newt found at Lytham St Annes to be part of the SAC population due to the distance of the development from the site, and therefore any impacts on great crested newts as a result of the project do not need to be considered with regards to the SAC population or within the HRA.	The Applicants welcome the agreement from Natural England.
Q9.2.10	The applicants, NE	Onshore ecology ES Chapter 3 [REP2-008] notes that Morecambe Bay SAC is within 15.48km. Can the applicants confirm whether there are any pathways of effect to Morecambe Bay SAC. Can NE confirm if it considers there is the potential for LSE to this site?	Natural England confirms that based on the information provided by the Applicant, there are no impact pathways that would result in a Likely Significant Effect (LSE) to features of Morecambe Bay SAC. We are not concerned about impacts on physical processes or benthic ecology on Morecambe Bay SAC due to sediment movement primarily occurring to the South. In terms of coastal habitats (saltmarsh and sand dunes) listed on the SAC, there are no impact pathways due to the distance from the development and the use of trenchless techniques at landfall.	The Applicants welcome the agreement from Natural England.
Q9.2.11	The applicants, NE	Onshore ecology ES Chapter 3: Onshore Ecology and nature conservation [APP-075] (Table 3.7) states that the Ribble and Alt Estuary Ramsar site is designated for Criteria 2: 'this site supports up to 40% of the Great Britain population of natterjack toads Bufo calamita'. However, impacts to this feature have not been	Natural England has not previously commented on the impacts from the project on Natterjack Toads for this project, based on the baseline ecological data provided in support of the application. The Applicant has undertaken a desk study using records from Lancashire Environmental Records Network (LERN), which did not return any records of Natterjack Toads within the vicinity of the project.	The Applicants welcome the agreement of no potential for LSE on the natterjack toad feature of the Ribble & Alt Estuary Ramsar site. The Applicants are in agreement with Natural England regarding the potential for LSE on habitat features of the Ribble and Alt Estuary

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
		assessed in the HRA Screening Report. Confirm whether there is the potential for LSE? In addition, what is the potential for LSE on the habitat features of the Ramsar site?	On the basis of the ecological baseline data presented, as natterjack toads are not present within the area, Natural England advise there is no potential for LSE on natterjack toads. In Skelcher 2024 A review of ecological change in relation to management interventions undertaken on the Fylde Sand Dunes Project, Lancashire final report for Lancashire Wildlife Trust & Our Future Coast - it notes: 'Slacks at the Local Nature Reserve have successfully provided habitat for spawning fogs and common toads while frogs have also produced spawn in Fairhaven slacks. These populations have been monitored over the last five years by the Sand Dunes Ranger and data on the presence or absence of spawn is sent to PondNet and will also be added to the ARC database when time allows'. It is Natural England's understanding that if natterjack toads were present at the site then they would have been recorded during these surveys. Natural England advises the potential for LSE on the habitat features of the Ramsar site is the same as the potential for LSE on Ribble & Alt Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA) habitat features; it relates to the habitat features that support the qualifying bird species. Any impacts on the supporting habitat of the qualifying bird species may hinder the Conservation Objectives of the SPA and Ramsar site, which is to maintain and restore 'the structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features rely'.	Ramsar site being the same as the potential for LSE on Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA habitat features. Potential impacts on supporting habitats of qualifying seabirds (both temporary and permanent loss of supporting habitats) were screened into the HRA Stage 1 Screening Report (see Table 1.27 of APP-018) for both the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site. These potential impacts have been fully assessed in light of the conservation objectives for both the SPA and Ramsar site in the Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 2 Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment Part Three – Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar Site assessments (APP-017). The Applicants note the conclusion of no AEoI for the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA and the Ribble & Alt Estuaries Ramsar site.
9.3 ISAA				
Q9.3.1	The applicants, NE	Onshore ecology At relevant representation [RR-1601], entry G16, NE refer to the Ribble and Alt Estuaries in its concerns relating to "the worst-case scenario i.e. cable installation failure when using the Direct Pipe Trenchless Technique whereby the Applicant needs to use an alternative technique has not been assessed" The ExA notes the applicants' response [PDA-021] which states that "The Applicants will continue discussions with Natural England in relation to the assessment of alternative trenchless techniques". Can the applicants confirm how the potential for alternative techniques at this location (with reference to the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar site) has been considered within the HRA ISAA [APP-017]? Can NE confirm whether there are any implications for the conclusions of the HRA screening [APP-018] or ISAA [APP-017] as a result of the absence of assessment of alternative trenchless techniques).	Natural England's comments relating to the assessment of the WCS are still applicable. Comment G16 is in relation specifically to Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI. Natural England cannot comment on the implications for conclusions of HRA screening as no alternative installation methodologies have been included in the application. Therefore, rather than an updated assessment we advise that the use of trenchless activities only is secured in the DCO/dML and should this fail then any other method would be subject to a separate marine licence/planning permission.	The Applicants note this response and would direct NE to their response to this question (see Q9.3.1 in the 'Applicants' Response to Examining Authority's Written Questions (ExQ1)' (REP3-056) where the Applicants have confirmed the commitment to Direct Pipe as the trenchless technique beneath the Lytham St Annes SSSI and the St Annes Old Links Golf Course (CoT44).
9.4 ISAA Part 2				
Q9.4.1	NE	Benthic Special Areas of Conservation The ExA notes that NE has detailed a number of concerns over the applicants' assessment on the Fylde Marine	Natural England does not have any concerns regarding the conclusion of the HRA screening, this is due to the nature of the features present and the proximity of the SAC from the red line	The Applicants welcome this response.

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
		Conservation Zone (MCZ) [RR-1601]. Noting that this site is directly adjacent to the Shell Flats and Lune Deep SAC, for the avoidance of doubt can you confirm whether you consider there are any concerns relating to this site (or any others) in relation to the conclusion of the HRA screening and ISAA as a result of your concerns over the assessment of effects on the Fylde MCZ.	boundaries, and therefore the likely insignificance of secondary pathways of effect in ecological terms.	
Q9.4.2	NE	Marine Mammal SACs In NE's relevant representation [RR-1601] NE raises (E1 and E17) matters relating to the inclusion of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) clearance within the Deemed Marine Licence in the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO). Whilst it is noted that the applicants have removed high order UXO clearance from the draft DMLs (dDML), can NE confirm whether there are any implications for the conclusions of the HRA assessments from UXO being included in the dDML?	Natural England notes there are no English SACs designated for marine mammals within the Irish Sea. Natural England defer to NRW for any sites designated for marine mammals within their jurisdiction. Natural England's position on UXO clearance is outlined in [RR-1601 comment E1/E17], we strongly advise that a separate marine licence is sought due to the lack of information available regarding the size, type and number of UXO that will require clearance and the over precaution that must be incorporated into the impact assessment at this stage. Natural England welcomes the removal of high order UXO detonations from the DCO and the outline MMMP submitted at D2 [REP2-027]. However Natural England maintains its position that UXO detonation should be subject to a separate marine licence post consent, regardless of whether the removal is low or high order.	The Applicants note the comment and the position taken by Natural England on this point, however it is the Applicants' position that it is appropriate and justified to include UXO clearance (limited to low order clearance) activities within the draft DCO/ dMLs (C1/F06). The Applicants have included all necessary activities for the construction and operation and maintenance of the Transmission Assets in the application for development consent, to ensure a comprehensive application, and all such activities have been subject to a robust assessment process. This includes UXO clearance activities, with suitable mitigation secured (Outline Marine Mammal Mitigation Protocol (REP2-026) and a commitment to not clearing UXO within the Liverpool Bay SPA between Nov – Mar (inclusive) as set out under CoT130 in Commitments Register (REP3-013)). Including only low order UXO clearance activities within the draft DCO/dMLs, and appropriate controls under Condition 20 of Schedule 14 and 15 (REP3-009), is intended to remove the need to apply for and obtain a further licence post-consent and prior to construction, assisting with the expeditious delivery of the Transmission Assets project, contributing to UK Government targets for Net Zero. This is consistent with the approach taken for the Morgan Generation project and the recently consented Mona Offshore Wind Project.
Q9.4.3	NE, NRW	Marine Mammal SACs The ExA notes that the assessment of impacts to marine mammal features has been undertaken in a 'two tier' approach (outlined in paragraphs 1.8.1.2 to 1.8.2.4 of ISAA Part 2 [APP-016]). Some sites are assessed 'in full', against the conservation objectives, and for the remaining sites an iterative approach was taken. This applied the conclusion from the site closest to the Offshore Order Limits to assess the remaining sites located at a greater distance from the Offshore Order Limits. Whilst conclusions are provided for these sites, the relevant conservation objectives are not provided or assessed against. Can you confirm if you have any concerns with the applicants' methodology for the HRA assessment of marine mammals?	Natural England notes there are no English SACs designated for marine mammals within the Irish Sea. Natural England defer to NRW for any sites designated for marine mammals within their jurisdiction which may be affected by the proposed development.	The Applicants note Natural England's response. The Applicants also reiterate (as per the Applicants' Response to Examining Authority's Written Questions (ExQ1), REP3-056) that for sites located partly or exclusively in English or Northern Ireland waters a full assessment against the conservation objectives was undertaken. The iterative approach was only followed for those SACs exclusively located in Welsh or Irish waters. Those sites which were assessed in full are set out in Table 1.81 of Volume 2, Chapter 4: Marine mammals (APP-050).
9.5 ISAA Part 3				
Q9.5.1	NE	Offshore Ornithology The applicants state in [PDA-020] (response to NE Issue F1 [RR-1601]) that you have agreed to the approach to the cumulative assessment through the Evidence Plan process	We understand this issue relates to the potential impacts on red-throated diver and common scoter as these species are particularly sensitive to displacement and disturbance.	The Applicants welcome the resolution of this issue at Deadline 3.

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
		and maintains that the assessment is robust. If your view has changed since the Evidence Plan, explain why this is the case and provide reasons why a quantified cumulative assessment of displacement and disturbance impacts is required. Which receptors are you primarily concerned about?	The Applicant has now committed to a full restriction on construction activities within the sensitive winter period for these species of 1st November to 31st March (inclusive) within the area of Liverpool Bay SPA where densities of these species warranted the original classification of the site, plus a 2km buffer to account for evidence indicating that disturbance/displacement can affect these species out to this distance. As a result, we consider that the issue is now resolved because the potential for disturbance/displacement effects from the cable installation has been effectively removed.	
Q9.5.2	NE	Offshore Ornithology In response to NE Issue F9 [RR-1601], the applicants provide justification for including the populations from Irish SPAs in a bespoke regional population [PDA-020]. Considering the applicants' response, why does NE consider Furness is more appropriate?	It is true that there are limitations to Furness (2015), and a project is currently ongoing which aims to address these, updating the Biologically Defined Minimum Population Sizes (BDMPS) populations with more recent data and taking into account more realistic biological assumptions. Currently, however, Furness (2015) is the standard reference advised for use across all UK offshore wind farms and there are advantages to taking a consistent approach. All offshore ornithological impact assessments carry inherent uncertainty, but the use of standard reference data allows clearer consideration of the relative significance of predicted impacts. Moreover, where there is uncertainty around the most appropriate reference population to use, the precautionary approach is to use a lower value, as higher reference population values risk the under-estimation of potential impacts.	The Applicants' position remains as set out at RR-1601.F.9 in PDA-020. This population is used as part of the assessment of the impacts of disturbance and/or displacement from airborne sound, underwater sound and presence of vessels and infrastructure impact. However, as the Applicants have committed to a seasonal restriction during construction and Operation and Maintenance phases (see CoT110, CoT111, CoT130, CoT135 within the Commitments Register (F1.5.3/F05)) there will be no further disturbance impact and therefore the use of this population, or any other, is not required. Additionally, the Applicants highlight that the following measures have already been included in the Measures to Minimise Disturbance to Marine Mammals and Rafting Birds from vessels at Deadline 2 (REP2-025) and applied, wherever possible, during transit through Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA and out to 2 km from the Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA boundary to and from port and works areas, in line with Natural England's Best Practice Protocol for Vessels in Red Throated Diver SPAs guidance on selecting routes that avoid known aggregations of birds: maintaining direct transit routes (to minimise transit distances through areas used by divers); and avoidance of over-revving of engines (to minimise noise disturbance).
Q9.5.3	NE	Offshore Ornithology Are you satisfied with the applicants' response regarding the exclusion of West of Duddon Sands Offshore Windfarm from the in- combination assessment for either common scoter or red-throated diver (see response to F17 in [PDA-020])?	In the Applicant's response to RR-1601F.17 the Applicant has clarified that West of Duddon Sands (WoDS) was included in one table listing projects for the in-combination assessment and omitted from two others – this appears to be an oversight. WoDS should be included in the red-throated diver (RTD) in-combination assessment as a matter of best practice. However, in this case, as the Applicant has committed to a full restriction on construction activities within the sensitive winter period for RTD of November to March (inclusive) within the area of the original Liverpool Bay boundary and a 2km buffer, an adverse effect on site integrity in-combination can be ruled out regardless of whether or not WoDS is included. Natural England advises that it is not necessary to include WoDS for the common scoter in-combination assessment, as WoDS is more than 4km from the SPA boundary.	The Applicants welcome the resolution of this issue at Deadline 3.
Q9.5.7	NE	Onshore and intertidal ornithology In light of the applicants' clarification regarding impacts to common tern from the Preston Dock colony (see [PDA-023]),	Natural England advises that REP2-044 provides sufficient information to resolve our comments relating to the River Ribble crossing. As the Applicant has provided further information, Natural	The Applicants welcome the resolution of this issue at Deadline 3.

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
		does this resolve NE's concerns in H43 of [RR-1601]? If not, why not?	England is satisfied that the risk to the SPA common terns at Preston Dock is resolved.	
Q9.5.9	NE	Onshore and intertidal ornithology The applicant states that herring gull, Arctic tern and great black-backed gull are not listed as assemblage features of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA (see applicant's response to NE's relevant representation [PDA-023]). Can you confirm? Does this alter NE's concerns expressed in H54 and H55 of [RR-1601]?	Natural England advises that all breeding 'seabirds' contribute to the breeding seabird assemblage, whether named 'key components' or not. In the light of PDA-023, NE considers the risk to the SPA seabird assemblage interest feature to be minimal as a consequence of this development. Nevertheless, the Applicant should be aware that it is more than the named 'key components' that should have been given consideration. In other words, we do not agree with the Applicant's assessment methodology, but for this specific project we consider the conclusion of no AEoI to be correct for the seabird assemblage feature.	The Applicants note the response and welcome the agreement on the conclusions presented in the Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 2 Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment Part Three – Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar Site assessments (APP-017).
Q9.5.10	NE	Onshore and intertidal ornithology In H53 [RR-1601] you disagree with the applicants' assessment at paragraph 1.6.3.136 of the ISAA Part 3, which states that as all features of the non-breeding waterbird assemblage have been assessed independently there is not predicted to be any additional impact upon the assemblage. Explain why NE disagrees with the applicant and what additional information is required.	Natural England disagreed with the conclusion of no AEoI, for the individual features that form 'key components' of the waterbird assemblage (RR-1601 comment H52). As the waterbird assemblage feature includes all the individual species, we therefore do not agree with the conclusion of no AEoI for the non-breeding assemblage feature as a whole (RR-1601 comment H53). We have been working with the Applicant to discuss the impacts on non-breeding assemblage features and have undertaken a high-level review of [REP2-044], [REP2-045] and [REP2-018]. Whilst we welcome the additional material provided by the Applicant, our view is that to be confident in the conclusions we need more detail on the proposed mitigation/compensation for the intertidal works and the proposed mitigation for the onshore cable impacts, in order to ascertain that the loss of FLL for the duration of the work programme will not be significant for those key component species. Unfortunately, as set out in our Deadline 3 cover letter, our detailed review of [REP2-044], [REP2-045] and [REP2-018] has been delayed by unforeseen circumstances, but we will be responding specifying the additional details required for the onshore mitigation as soon as possible. Additionally, we highlight that the waterbird assemblage is more than just the product of its 'key components', it is derived from all 'waterbirds' with a need for the assemblage to protect the number; diversity and quality of species contributing to the assemblage. Therefore we require further evidence to show that the needs of the non-named assemblage species are accommodated in the measures being provided as mitigation (RR-1601 comments H7, H22 and H61). We again highlight our concerns regarding the lack of scheduling of the onshore cable works. Submission of a phasing plan or similar mechanism would both clarity the impacts on FLL and also allow a clearer sense of the effectiveness of the mitigation requirements both temporally and spatially.	The Applicants note that there is not agreement between Natural England and the Applicants with respect to the conclusions of the HRA Stage 1 Screening Report (APP-018). The Applicants highlight that all waterbirds recorded during survey were assessed within F3.4 Volume 3, Chapter 4: Onshore and intertidal ornithology (APP-090) and note that the more sensitive wader and wildfowl features were fully assessed in E2.3 Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 2 Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment Part Three – Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar Site assessments (APP-017). The majority of the waterbirds that were not fully assessed within the HRA are largely composed of non-breeding gulls, however the Applicants are committed to providing further detail surrounding the full range of waterbirds that were recorded during survey and are confident that the addition of these species does not alter the conclusions of the HRA. An update will be submitted into Deadline 4 (see onshore terrestrial waterbird note (S_D4_17).
12. Land use and recreation				
Q12.1.2	Natural England (NE)	Agricultural land	Natural England acknowledges the comparisons between developments made by the Applicant in REP1-043. Each	The Applicants welcome the acknowledgement of the comparisons made in REP1-043 and maintain that the precautionary approach applied to the

Reference	Question To	ExA Question	IP submission	Applicants' response
		NE raised concerns about the agricultural land classification [RR-1601] and the applicants have responded to this in the response to action point 45 [REP1-043]. The applicants confirm that the results of their initial surveys conclude that the potential impact of the loss of agricultural land including best and most versatile land during construction is a major adverse effect and further surveys were unlikely to alter this conclusion. However, this is justified on the basis of the temporary period of construction. In their recent deadline 2 (D2) response, NE confirm that it is reviewing the position and will provide their comments by deadline 3. The Examining Authority (ExA) looks forward to receiving these comments and would be grateful if NE could also comment on the comparisons made at paragraph 1.4 of the applicants' response [REP1-043] with other offshore wind farm Development Consent Orders?	development is different and therefore advice can vary depending on the location and land type which is potentially impacted. Natural England's advice provided specifically for this project remains unchanged [REP-1601]. There are other projects where similar advice has been given e.g. Outer Dowsing is not referenced in REP1-043 but includes consistent advice relating to survey effort in line with the advice provided for this development. Further information relating to our comments on ALC are included in Annex G3. In reference to offshore wind farm developments in Welsh waters, Natural England's approach differs from that of Welsh Government. This is summarised in Natural England's Position Statement: Use of ALC Data in Land Use Planning. Natural England supports the sustainable use and long-term protection of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land, in line with paragraph 5.11.34 of the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN1), which emphasises that poorer quality land should be used in preference to higher quality land where significant development is proposed. Unlike the Welsh Government, which has published a national-scale predictive ALC dataset capable of distinguishing between ALC Subgrades 3a and 3b, Natural England currently relies on provisional ALC mapping that does not differentiate within Grade 3 land. As a result, in England, the formal identification of BMV land (Grades 1, 2, and 3a) must be determined through detailed site-specific ALC field surveys, typically undertaken as part of the development planning process. This approach reflects the limitations of existing data coverage and ensures that decisions regarding land take are made on a robust and case-by-case basis. While predictive tools are under consideration, Natural England maintains that field-verified data remains the most accurate and defensible basis for assessing agricultural land quality and informing the development of Soil Management Plans and mitigation strategies. Natural England welcomes continued collaboration with developers and planning authorities to ensure that soil resources are safeguarded, and that land quality is appropriately considered in line with national policy objectives.	ES assessment provides a robust assessment. The Applicant maintains that the survey work undertaken provides the information required to underpin the ES assessment and provide the data to develop the outline soil management plan. The Applicants would welcome the opportunity of directly liaising with the Natural England soils representative on this Project.

6 Applicants' Response to IPs' response to Written Questions (ExQ1)

6.1 Natural England AS-078 – Appendix H3 to Natural England's Deadline 3 Submission

Table 6-1: AS-078 – Appendix H3 to Natural England's Deadline 3 Submission

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
Natural England's comments on Onshore and Intertidal Ornithology		
AS-078 078.1	**Major/Complex comments** **Summary**	The Applicants acknowledge the detailed feedback on recent submissions and welcome the determination that there are no Adverse Effects on Integrity (AEoI) for the wintering features of the Ribble and Alt SPA/Ramsar site following the inclusion of

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	Natural England has previously provided detailed comments relating to the Applicant's onshore and intertidal ornithology assessments in our Relevant Representations [RR-1601]. Since then, Natural England has undertaken a site meeting with the Applicant to discuss outstanding areas of disagreement and visited some of the proposed mitigation areas, the River Ribble Crossing and the landfall/intertidal location. Following the site meeting, we provided written comments to the Applicant through our Discretionary Advice Service (DAS). For reference, we have included these comments in Annex 1 of this Advice letter. Natural England welcome the Applicant's submissions of onshore and intertidal ornithology documents at Deadline 2. We can confirm that the Applicant's provision of the Technical Note on Newton Marsh SSSI and River Ribble [REP2-044] has satisfied our concerns with regards to Newton Marsh SSSI and the River Ribble crossing, pending some minor updates as stated in our advice letter below. Additionally, we welcome the Applicant's inclusion of an overwintering restriction on all construction activity from 1 November to 31 March (inclusive) at landfall. This addresses Natural England's concerns regarding over-wintering SPA/Ramsar site waterbirds using the intertidal zone, and as a result, Adverse Effects on Integrity (AEoI) can now be ruled out for these features of the SPA/Ramsar site, as reflected in our Risk and Issues Log submission at Deadline 3 [REP3-094]. We highlight that some areas of outstanding disagreement remain. Our outstanding concerns relate to the impacts on passage SPA/Ramsar site waterbirds using the intertidal zone at the landfall and the proposed management at Fairhaven saltmarsh, and the measures proposed to address the loss of/disturbance to Functionally Linked Land (FLL) used by SPA/Ramsar site waterbirds affected by the onshore cable route. We have provided further comments on our outstanding concerns within this advice letter. Natural England advise that the Applicant updates technical notes and ES Chapters to fully reflect SNCB advice, as provided in our Relevant Representations and subsequent advice notes. Unless subsequent updated documents/new documents are submitted into Examination by the Applicant, or we are specifically asked by the Examiner to comment on a submission, we will not be engaging further.	the winter seasonal restriction (CoT110). The Applicants also appreciate the confirmation that concerns regarding Newton Marsh SSSI and the River Ribble crossing have been largely addressed, pending minor updates. The Applicants recognise that outstanding issues remain concerning the passage features of the Ribble and Alt SPA at the landfall, specifically relating to the management of the Fairhaven saltmarsh, as well as the proposed measures to mitigate the loss of or disturbance to Functionally Linked Land (FLL) used by SPA/Ramsar site waterbirds affected by the onshore cable route. The Applicants remain fully committed to addressing these matters and to working collaboratively with Natural England to reach a resolution. In support of this commitment, the Applicants met with Natural England on 25 July 2025. Following Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2), the Applicants have submitted, at Deadline 4, a note providing clarification on their current position with Natural England concerning the Adverse Effect on Integrity and the Fairhaven saltmarsh mitigation area (Adverse effects on integrity (AEoI) (ISH2.12) and Passage Birds at Landfall Note (S_D4_18)).
AS-078 078.2	**Newton Marsh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** Natural England welcome the Applicant's provision of the Technical Note on Newton Marsh SSSI and River Ribble Crossing [REP2-044]. The information provided in [REP2-044] satisfies Natural England's concerns relating potential to impacts on Newton Marsh SSSI from visual and noise disturbance. The technical note contains sufficient detail on the trenching and cable burial activities, construction compounds and access tracks in close proximity to the SSSI. We believe this issue can be readily resolved if the Applicant includes appropriate text to reflect this additional detail in the Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment (ISAA) document [APP-017]. This is necessary as the site is used by SPA/Ramsar site waterbirds, and therefore the issue is an SPA/Ramsar site as well as an SSSI matter. This is also stated in our Risk and Issues Log (Appendix K, comment ref: RI_H8). Should any design changes/ changes to construction parameters occur which may affect the potential for disturbance on the SSSI, Natural England should be informed.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's conclusion that there will be no adverse effects on Newton Marsh SSSI. The Applicants have committed to update information in HRA Stage 2 Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment Part Three (APP-017) (for onshore and offshore ornithology) at Deadline 5.
AS-078 078.3	**River Ribble Crossing** The information provided in [REP2-044] satisfies Natural England's concerns relating to potential visual impacts and noise impacts on ornithological receptors present at the River Ribble Crossing. The technical note contains sufficient additional detail on the extent of the flood embankments, the presence of hedges and the steep slope down to the farmland (where the entry and exit pits will be located, sitting below the embankment height). Taken together, this information illustrates that visual disturbance impacts to SPA/Ramsar site waterbirds are unlikely to occur. Further, due to the presence of the embankments, the noise modelling presented in [REP2-044] shows noise levels will be below the level where disturbance is likely to occur.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's conclusion that there will be no adverse effect on site integrity from the planned works at the River Ribble crossing. The Applicants have committed to update information in HRA Stage 2 Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment Part Three (APP-017) (for onshore and offshore ornithology) at Deadline 5.

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	We believe this issue can be readily resolved if the Applicant includes appropriate text to reflect this additional detail in the ISAA document [APP-017]. This is also stated in our Risk and Issues Log (Appendix K, comment ref: RI_H27).	
AS-078 078.4	**Passage SPA/Ramsar site waterbirds at Landfall** Natural England welcome and acknowledge the efforts made by the Applicant to reduce impacts to features at landfall, including the over-wintering seasonal restriction and the technical notes and updated Outline Ecological Management (OEMP) [REP2-019] submitted at Deadline 2. To address the outstanding issues regarding passage SPA/Ramsar site waterbirds, Natural England advise that the Applicant needs to further consider the mitigation hierarchy. This advice was included in our Relevant Representations [RR-1601]. We acknowledge that the seasonal restriction is a significant measure to avoiding impacts to over-wintering features, and we encourage the Applicant to explore the possibility of extending the restriction to avoid impacts to passage features too. Recognising that full restrictions to the passage periods may be very challenging, we recommend the Applicant consider whether partial restrictions e.g. April, October might be practicable. Once this mitigation option is exhausted, we then advise the Applicant to consider further reducing the impacts at the source i.e. at the landfall in the first instance. It is unclear whether measures such as visual screening and noise reduction techniques have been considered. We also believe that a more strategic approach might merit consideration e.g. implementing a wider working corridor to allow birds to feed without disturbance in the vicinity of the works. Reducing the impact on the feeding birds would reduce the potential significant energy loss. Additionally, reducing the impact at source could involve an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) being situated strategically at 'pinch points' where the public will cross the working corridor and inform the public of areas of the foreshore to avoid to give birds space to feed. More generally, we advise any mitigation needs to be well developed, deliverable and include measures to monitor its effectiveness for the impacts it is in place to mitigate for. The details of the mitigation required are discussed in detail in section 1.5 and Table 1. <u>Energetics</u> Natural England notes the information provided in [REP2-045] outlining the Applicant's approach to assessing energetics of passage features at landfall/Fairhaven saltmarsh. The information provided in [REP2-045] provides some clarity on the likely energy costs and savings of affected passage features. We believe the information provided is moving in the right direction, however some concerns still remain, particularly relating to the deliverability of the energy savings and associated potential for a significant gap between expenditure and recouping. This is discussed further in section 1.5. To progress discussions, we have a teams call scheduled with the Applicant in the week commencing 21st July to discuss onshore ornithology matters further.	The Applicants welcome Natural England recognition of their efforts to mitigate at the landfall including the seasonal restrictions and the updated ecological management plans. The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's advice to further consider the mitigation hierarchy for passage SPA/Ramsar site waterbirds. The Applicants are working closely with Natural England to address this issue and are currently in discussions about measures to reduce impacts at source. The Applicants had a productive meeting with Natural England on 25th July and have considered additional source-level mitigation measures—such as visual screening and ECoW(s)—to effectively minimise disturbance to passage SPA/Ramsar site waterbirds. Following Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2), the Applicants have submitted, at Deadline 4, a note providing clarification on the current position with Natural England concerning the Adverse Effect on Integrity (AEoI) in response to Hearing Action Point ISH2.12 (S_D4_9.1). <u>Energetics:</u> The Applicants welcome Natural England's recognition of the information provided in (REP2-045) regarding the assessment of energetics for passage features at the landfall and Fairhaven Saltmarsh. The Applicants hope that the discussions around the landfall will address Natural England's concerns about the birds' energetic balance. Furthermore, the Applicants anticipate that if Natural England agrees no AEoI at the landfall during the passage periods, additional mitigation measures at Fairhaven Saltmarsh may not be necessary.
AS-078 078.5	**Management at Fairhaven Saltmarsh** Natural England have ongoing concerns regarding the suitability of the Fairhaven Saltmarsh as a mitigation area. As previously raised in our Relevant Representations [RR-1601], more detail is required to be confident that the measures are achievable and deliverable. One of the key concerns that remains for Natural England is the appropriateness of Fairhaven Saltmarsh as a mitigation site due to it being heavily disturbed by recreational users. It should also be noted that the birds foraging and loafing at the landfall area towards high tide are potentially birds that have been flushed from Fairhaven Saltmarsh in the first instance, as also recognised by the Applicant in [REP2-046]. At present, we are not confident that the measures proposed by the Applicant in their Deadline 2 submissions will fully combat the impacts from recreational users. We therefore advise that further detail is still required from the Applicant in the form of a clear deliverable work plan for the mitigation area, with indicative timescales and benchmarks. The management plan should also include the delivery of monitoring to ensure the	The Applicants share Natural England's view (Q6.1.2, in REP3-095, Responses to the Examining Authority's written questions) that if disturbance effects at the landfall during the passage season can be reduced to acceptable levels through mitigation, the Fairhaven Saltmarsh could be considered as an enhancement measure. The Applicants are clear that with the additional measures at source that have been committed to within the Outline Ecological Management Plan (J6/F04) submitted at Deadline 4, that there will be no AEoI on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA during the passage period and that Fairhaven Saltmarsh would therefore constitute an enhancement measure. This is set out in response to Hearing Action Point ISH2.12 (S_D4_9.1).

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	implemented measures are appropriate. Adaptive management should be embedded to ensure the results of monitoring inform ongoing management. The mitigation plan not only needs to account for suitability to cater for all species/birds displaced from the landfall area, but also how measures will be implemented to adapt the behaviour of recreational users that regularly frequent the Fairhaven site and surrounding foreshore. Although the detail in the OEMP [REP2-019] on wardening, signage, local education and fencing is in principle appropriate, altering peoples' behaviour could be a significant blocker to the success of the mitigation area and this part of the mitigation proposal needs to be further developed. Additionally, as highlighted above we advise that this measure should be considered at the source of impact itself i.e. within the landfall working corridor. This area of foreshore is regularly used by recreational users to walk from one end of the beach to the promenade next to the Fairhaven Saltmarsh, and wardens/ECoWs should be considered for both locations. We have included detailed comments on suggested measures to include in a management plan in Table 1. In the absence of an appropriate management plan, we are not confident that the Fairhaven mitigation site will lead to energy savings for passage features of Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA/Ramsar. Daily energy budgets are likely to be increased by the temporary habitat loss and disturbance at landfall, and without further detail we are not confident that sufficient energy savings will be made by reducing disturbance at the roost site. If the mitigation at Fairhaven is unsuccessful, the birds will incur greater energetic losses by having to travel greater distances to a suitable alternative roost site.	
AS-078 078.6	**Management measures for loss of Functionally Linked Land (FLL)** Works occurring through the onshore cable corridor and at the substation locations during the construction period have the potential to cause disturbance, displacement and temporary/permanent habitat loss for all SPA/Ramsar site birds using the corridor. There are a suite of birds utilising the corridor as FLL in significant numbers (over 1% of the population). The OEMP [REP2-019] provides further detail on the temporary mitigation area at Lytham Moss stating it will be set up "*to provide temporary habitat (foraging areas) for pink-footed geese and whooper swan during the construction period*.", however detail is required e.g. in the form of a Supplementary Feeding Strategy to outline an indicative plan. Further comments are included in Table 1. Additionally, the Lytham Moss mitigation area needs to be utilised by other displaced species occurring in numbers >1% according to baseline surveys e.g. redshank, black-tailed godwit, teal, shelduck, wigeon and golden plover (APP-017 and APP-092). There has been no detail on delivering mitigation for these species which may use the area once displaced or disturbed. These SPA/Ramsar site species have specific requirements and it cannot be assumed that measure for the prioritised species will address the impacts on these. Without detail on how mitigation habitats will cater for other species potentially impacted during construction using the cable corridor, Natural England cannot advise on suitability or be confident in the conclusions drawn in the ISAA. The need for this additional detail has already been included in our Relevant Representations [RR-1601] and discussed on the site visit on 28th April 2025. We acknowledge that the additional information included in the OEMP [REP2-019] does provide some supplementary detail, however the detail is not sufficient to satisfy concerns that this area will effectively function for the FLL affected species at an appropriate scale. At present Natural England are still not confident that the mitigation area can provide for all the birds likely to be displaced at any one time. We consider that the permanent mitigation area at Newton-with-Scales has the potential to support the mitigation need. We acknowledge the additional information provided within the OEMP [REP2-019], which does include specific details on creation of scrapes suitable for waders and wildfowl and re-wetting areas by installing sluices. The measures and indicative locations of the mitigation measures are potentially appropriate for the birds likely to require alternative habitat; however we advise that further detail is still required and greater consideration of its suitability on a species-by-species basis. Specifically, as mentioned for the other mitigation areas, information is needed on how the site will be delivered and how the desired habitats will be achieved at an appropriate scale. Both these aspects of the mitigation area were discussed on the site visit on 28th April 2025. It remains our position that for both the mitigation areas (Lytham Moss and Newton-with-	The Applicants held a productive meeting with Natural England on 25 July 2025. Following Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2). The Applicants have submitted, at Deadline 4, a note providing clarification on the terrestrial waterbirds (onshore terrestrial waterbirds note (S_D4_17)) and an updated Outline Ecological Management Plan (J6/F04). One of the aims of the Terrestrial Waterbirds note was to outline the approach used to determine FLL, and the Applicants' conclusion that FLL exists for pink-footed goose, whooper swan, teal, golden plover and black-tailed godwit but not for shelduck, wigeon or redshank. The oEMP has been updated with reference to how the species with FLL are being mitigated for through the existing mitigation areas at Lytham Moss and Newton with Scales, and the updates to the oEMP also give additional detail on the measures that will be used.

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	Scales) there is insufficient detail on how these sites will effectively support the FLL for displaced and disturbed species and how these mitigation areas will effectively be delivered. Additionally, there has been minimal consideration of the extent to which the areas will deliver for the birds that are currently using these mitigation areas, in addition to the birds potentially displaced and/or disturbed which could also use the areas during the construction period. Further detail is therefore required to show how the birds impacted by the development will be supported in addition to birds already using the areas. Therefore, we advise that the Applicant should produce detailed draft Habitat Management Plans for the mitigation areas which should include detail on the measures, their relevance to specific waterbirds species, how these measures will be delivered, timescales of delivery and monitoring to demonstrate the measures are appropriate and inform adaptive management if needed. For each mitigation area suggested measures that could be included are discussed in Table 1.	
AS-078 078.7	**Construction Phase Timetabling** To understand the potential scale of disturbance and displacement at any one-time during construction, further information on the phasing of works is necessary. We reiterate our Relevant Representations comments on this matter. Without an indicative work schedule, Natural England has to assume the Worst-Case Scenario which is that all the works could be carried out simultaneously and therefore the risk of impacts to SPA/Ramsar features is greater. We therefore urge the Applicant to further consider phasing of works. If the Applicant included a phasing plan, this would likely reduce the need for the mitigation areas to have to deliver for all displaced birds and would therefore reduce the risk.	The Applicants direct Natural England to Q1.13 of the 'Applicants' Response to Examining Authority's Written Questions (ExQ1)' (REP3-056) where the construction phases and scenarios are provided in detail.
Natural England's Advice On: Onshore and Intertidal Ornithology – Outline Ecological Management Plan [REP2-019]		
AS-078 078.8	**Reducing impacts at landfall** There are no proposed measures for reducing the impacts at the landfall itself during the passage periods. This area is well connected to Fairhaven Saltmarsh and implementing measures at both locations could aid in reducing recreational pressure. • Consideration of using ECoWs/ wardens at landfall to educate and deter recreational users from areas in the vicinity of the works which are being used by feeding/loafing birds; and • Screening areas from visual/noise disturbance where practicable, and increasing the working corridor to allow for undisturbed areas for birds to feed.	The Applicants remain fully committed to addressing these matters and to working collaboratively with Natural England to reach a resolution. In support of this commitment, the Applicants met with Natural England on 25 July 2025 and are working closely with Natural England to address this issue and are currently in discussions about measures to reduce impacts at source. The Applicants can confirm that they have committed to ensuring ECoWs are present during works at landfall and screening will be utilised around the compounds on the beach. This is outlined Section 1.6.4 of the updated Outline Ecological Management Plan submitted at Deadline 4 (J6/F04).
AS-078 078.9	**Local Education** Part of proposed mitigation measures include Local Education activities to be organised by Local Groups and potential visits to school. Concerns over lack of detail to demonstrate mitigation will be effective. NE advise that further detail should be provided to ensure the mitigation of Local Education will be effective and avoid any ambiguity regarding what is proposed, including: • Details of which Local Groups the applicant will work with, and *how*. We advise clarification should be provided if any other partnership working will be undertaken and on how the applicant will engage with these partners; • Further evidence to demonstrate Local Groups are committed to working with the Applicants to raise awareness of disturbance; and • Further information of what education material will be used, and what activities will be arranged. This should also include detail of what measures will be put in place to ensure any educational material is correct and kept up to date. **Wardening** Part of mitigation includes wardens being employed on site to further advise and educate the public.	The Applicants remain fully committed to addressing these matters and met with Natural England on 25 July 2025 to discuss the approach. The level of detail proposed by Natural England will be provided in discussion with them post consent. This ensures that the most appropriate measures are considered closer to the time of construction and involve groups and educational material when the detail is better understood. The Applicants feel that it is not proportionate to commit to the detail requested by Natural England with regards to the local education prior to undertaking surveys and full studies from experts in recreational disturbance and birds to inform the measures. As outlined in Section B.2.1.2 of the Outline Ecological Management Plan (OEMP) (J6/F04), the Applicants have committed to undertaking this package of work post consent to inform the detailed Ecological Management Plans; when more information is known about the detailed design and will represent the most uptodate baseline. In regards to Natural England's concerns around the wardens being effective, this mitigation has also been committed to within the OEMP. The Applicants feel that providing this level of detail ahead of detailed design and a better understanding of requirements is not proportionate at this stage. The Applicants will ensure that Natural England's concerns are dealt with post consent when greater understanding is known.

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	Concerns over lack of detail to demonstrate mitigation will be effective. NE advise that further detail should be provided to ensure the mitigation/stakeholder engagement will be effective and avoid any uncertainty including: • Who will the wardens be employed by - will this be the Applicant or a third party? ; • How many wardens will be employed, and evidence to demonstrate the level of site presence will be sufficient to effectively intervene to avoid disturbance to roosting birds; • How the critical months for the waders will be decided. Natural England would expect these decisions to be based on the bird survey evidence and include the timing that the roosting birds are using the area; and • What lead-in times will be used to establish a site presence and begin dialogue with regular users in advance of the critical months.	
AS-078 078.10	**Supplementary Feeding** Document updated which includes reference that supplementary feeding will be provided for pink-footed goose and whooper swan during core wintering period. Feeding will comprise retained spoiled crop on arable land or the import of additional feed, and will meet the calorific requirements of the affected species. The regime will be similar to that of the Farmland Conservation Area. Further information will be required to ensure the effectiveness of the Supplementary Feeding. We advise a Supplementary Feeding Strategy will be required, which includes the following details: • Evidence of how the timescales have been decided. The timing of the supplementary feeding should be based on the bird survey evidence on when the target birds are using the area (not just the core wintering period), and reflect likely rates of consumption; • If the applicant chooses to import additional feed, then the grain calculations should be included within the strategy to ensure its efficiency. These should be based on the calorific requirements of the effected species; • Clarification of when the supplementary feeding will start. NE advise any supplementary feeding should be instigated in the November of the year that the construction of the proposed development commences, or earlier if the bird evidence shows the birds are utilising the area earlier e.g. September or October; • Details of the monitoring that will be undertaken to ensure the supplementary feeding is effective, and to ensure adequate measures will be in place; and The length of time that the supplementary feeding will be in place.	The Applicants have provided an update to the Outline Ecological Management Plan (J6/F04) at Deadline 4 to outline their approach to supplementary feeding. This update sets out their approach on the timings of food provision as well as outlining amounts to be provided. The Applicants await feedback from Natural England, Blackpool Airport and BAE Systems on the timings and quantities but are suggesting: • Food provision to take place between November – March on a little and often basis so as not to attract additional autumn passage birds to overwinter in the area and thus increase the risk to aircraft safety • 1.2 tonnes of grain (or similar) to be provided every seven days during that period This approach is based upon the average number of geese and swans present and uses daily energy requirements taken from the literature. The Applicants are aware of the need to balance ecological mitigation with aircraft safety and have proposed what they consider to be measured amounts. The Applicants also note that this will be monitored and may need to be adjusted in consultation with Natural England, Blackpool Airport and BAE Systems.
AS-078 078.11	**Creation of Scrapes** We acknowledge the detail included on the creation of scrapes; however further information is required to ensure the scrapes will be maintained and monitored. We advise the Applicant to include subsequent detail in a draft Habitat Management Plan: • Managing water levels to maintain it at a suitable level; • Species specific measures to ensure the scrapes provide suitable habitat (with a focus on species occurring >1%); and • Grassland management in surrounding areas: sward height, mowing/grazing schedule to maintain surrounding area at an optimal time for the months proposed.	The Applicants have provided an update to the Outline Ecological Management Plan (J6 Outline Ecological Management Plan. J6/F04) at Deadline 4 to outline their approach to the creation of scrapes. Additional detail is provided on these points within that document.
AS-078 078.12	The area is proposed to be suitable to mitigate for non-breeding waders, breeding waders, wildfowl, and farmland birds and non-breeding wildfowl and farmland birds. The site is therefore going to be delivering for the needs of multiple different species and there is lack of detail of how this will be achieved.	The Applicants have provided an update to the Outline Ecological Management Plan (J6 Outline Ecological Management Plan J6/F04) at Deadline 4 to outline their approach to the creation of wet features. Additional detail is provided on these points within that document.

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	More detail is needed on measures for each group of birds and how these will be developed. This should be outlined in a detailed draft Habitat Management Plan. The plan should also include detail on monitoring the measures and commit to adaptive management on the basis of monitoring findings.	
AS-078 078.13	**Wet Features** There is no detail on where the sluices will be installed, target water levels and whether rewetting of the site will be monitored. The draft Habitat Management Plan should include additional detail outlining how rewetting will be achieved and monitored.	The Applicants have provided an update to the Outline Ecological Management Plan (J6 Outline Ecological Management Plan J6/F04) at Deadline 4 to outline their approach to rewetting and improving habitat for breeding and non-breeding waterbirds (Appendix B2.2 Land to the South of Newton-with-Scales). Additional detail is provided on these points within that document.
AS-078 078.14	**Creation of scrapes** There is a map showing the indicative locations of the scrapes and some detail on the location and size of the scrapes; however further detail is required to ensure the scrapes will be appropriately maintained. We advise the Applicant to include subsequent detail in a draft Habitat Management Plan: • Managing water level to maintain it at a suitable level and how this will be achieved; and • How the habitat will be designed to cater for species specific requirements	The Applicants have provided an update to the Outline Ecological Management Plan (J6 Outline Ecological Management Plan J6/F04) at Deadline 4 to outline their approach to the creation of scrapes. Additional detail is provided on these points within that document.
AS-078 078.15	**Grassland management** More detail is needed on how the mosaic of grassland will be delivered and maintained. We advise the Applicant to include further detail in a draft Habitat Management Plan: • Management regarding proposed sward height/s, approach to mowing/grazing to maintain area in optimal conditions for the months proposed, taking into account species-specific requirements; • Percentage of area for each grassland habitat to ensure the breeding and non-breeding birds will be supported by each area of varying height; • Indicative annual timings of grassland management; • Detail on predator management proposed for ground-nesting birds; and • Monitoring schedule to allow for adaptive management of the site as required.	The Applicants have provided an update to the Outline Ecological Management Plan (J6 Outline Ecological Management Plan J6/F04) at Deadline 4 to outline their approach to grassland management. Additional detail is provided on these points within that document.
AS-078 078.16	**Field Margins** More detail is required on the measures to improve the existing field margins. We advise the Applicant to include further detail in a draft Habitat Management Plan: • Information to show where the tall grasses and wildflower areas will be situated in relation to the other grassland habitats and scrapes; • Outline plan of planting hedgerows; and • More detail on changes to the cutting regime and 'gapping up' e.g. across all the field margins or certain sections and timings of cutting.	The Applicants have provided an update to the Outline Ecological Management Plan (J6 Outline Ecological Management Plan J6/F04) at Deadline 4 to outline their approach to field margins. Additional detail is provided on these points within that document.
Ornithology Technical Notes		
Detailed Comments: Liverpool Bay SPA Limited Working in November and December Technical Note		
AS-078 078.17	This technical note presents an updated Maximum Design Scenario (MDS) for the construction phase of the works. It details a commitment to restrict construction activity within the wintering period for the red-throated diver and common scoter features of Liverpool Bay SPA (LB SPA) to a maximum of 21 days in November and December for the purposes of completing cable burial. The MDS consists of a maximum of 5 vessels operating at any one time with a zone of influence of 76.97km^2.	The Applicant has now committed to a full seasonal restriction on all construction activity and low order UXO clearance from November to March (inclusive) within the original Liverpool Bay SPA plus a 2 km buffer [REP2-05]. Additionally, the Applicants have made a further commitment at Deadline 4 that the Applicants will not plan routine O&M activities in the original Liverpool Bay SPA (as designated in 2010), including a 2 km buffer between November and March (inclusive) unless in urgent circumstances (see CoT135 in F1.3.5 /F05). Natural England have confirmed in the Risks and Issues Log (REP3-094) that the Applicants commitments allows for adverse effects on the Liverpool Bay SPA to be ruled out. Natural England note that to fully resolve the issue, they recommend that this

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
		information is used to update the relevant parts of the application, in particular the Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment, which the Applicants have committed to doing for Deadline 5.
AS-078 078.18	**Basis of Natural England's assessment** The assessment presented focusses largely on the potential for mortality impacts on the red-throated diver and common scoter features of LB SPA, due to the disturbance effect of the construction vessels operating within the SPA. While the analysis presented is broadly in line with Natural England's best practice guidance for assessing displacement and disturbance impacts, in this case it is not the potential for mortality which has caused Natural England to consider that Adverse Effect on Integrity (AEoI) cannot be ruled out. As it is not the abundance attribute of the features which is of primary concern to Natural England, the analysis and discussion of baseline mortality increase, foraging days lost and species energetics dynamics do not have a particular bearing on our judgement regarding AEoI. As shown in Table 3, the conservation objectives for red-throated diver in LB SPA include the **distribution** of the feature as an attribute, with a target to *"Restore the distribution of the feature; preventing further deterioration, and where possible, reduce any existing anthropogenic influences impacting feature distribution"*. There is also a target to *"Restore the extent, distribution and **availability of suitable habitat** which supports the feature; preventing further deterioration"*. For common scoter, the equivalent targets are to *"Maintain the **distribution** of the feature; the extent should not be reduced by anthropogenic factors"*, and to *"Maintain the extent, distribution and **availability of suitable habitat** which supports the feature"*. Although "maintain" targets are less stringent than "restore" targets, we note that the cable route passes through an area of high scoter density, indicating that it is highly suitable habitat for that species and that relatively high numbers of individuals would be subject to disturbance. We consider that potentially excluding both these features from 76.97km^2 or 4.52%* of the original SPA for up to 21 days would not be aligned with the stated targets for these feature attributes, and that AEoI therefore cannot be ruled out. We continue to advise that the best way to avoid AEoI would be a commitment to avoid all construction activity throughout the sensitive winter period of November to March inclusive. *(We noted a calculation error in the response to Natural England's RRs (EN020028 Annex 3.2.12, Appendix F). The percentage of the original SPA area affected was given as 0.02% for a single 3.5km radius ZOI, when it should have been 2.26% (38.5km^2/1702.9km^2).)	The Applicant has now committed to a full seasonal restriction on all construction activity and low order UXO clearance from November to March (inclusive) within the original Liverpool Bay SPA plus a 2 km buffer [REP2-05]. Additionally, the Applicants have made a further commitment at Deadline 4 that the Applicants will not plan routine O&M activities in the original Liverpool Bay SPA (as designated in 2010), including a 2 km buffer between November and March (inclusive) unless in urgent circumstances (see CoT135 in F1.3.5 /F05). Natural England have confirmed in the Risks and Issues Log (REP3-094) that the Applicants commitments allows for adverse effects on the Liverpool Bay SPA to be ruled out. Natural England note that to fully resolve the issue, they recommend that this information is used to update the relevant parts of the application, in particular the Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment, which the Applicants have committed to doing for Deadline 5.
AS-078 078.19	**Densities** We note that there is uncertainty regarding the densities of the two species present in the SPA in the months of November and December, given the lack of survey data in those months. We do not consider that there is sufficient evidence presented to justify reducing the densities used in the assessment, and we consider the characterisation of the proposed reductions as 'precautionary' to be incorrect and misleading. In the context of significant variability and uncertainty, the precautionary approach is to use the unadjusted mean peak densities.	This comment is no longer of relevance as the Applicant has now committed to a full seasonal restriction on all construction activity and low order UXO clearance from November to March (inclusive) within the original Liverpool Bay SPA plus a 2 km buffer [REP2-05]. Additionally, the Applicants have made a further commitment at Deadline 4 that the Applicants will not plan routine O&M activities in the original Liverpool Bay SPA (as designated in 2010), including a 2 km buffer between November and March (inclusive) unless in urgent circumstances (see CoT135 in F1.3.5 /F05). As noted above for 078.18 and 078.18, Natural England have confirmed in the Risks and Issues Log (REP3-094) that the Applicants commitments allow for adverse effects on the Liverpool Bay SPA to be ruled out. Natural England note that to fully resolve the issue, they recommend that this information is used to update the relevant parts of the application, in particular the Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment, which the Applicants have committed to doing for Deadline 5.
AS-078 078.20	**Other comments** There appears to be a contradiction in the text on page 25 regarding the variability of the distribution of common scoters within the SPA. It is stated that the distribution of scoters shows little variation, but the paragraph goes on to state that defining a baseline distribution and detecting a change in distribution would be impossible due to the variability of the distribution. This may be due to a copy-paste error – there are a couple of	This comment is no longer of relevance as the Applicant has now committed to a full seasonal restriction on all construction activity and low order UXO clearance from November to March (inclusive) within the original Liverpool Bay SPA plus a 2 km buffer [REP2-05]. Additionally, the Applicants have made a further commitment at Deadline 4 that the Applicants will not plan routine O&M activities in the original Liverpool Bay SPA (as designated in 2010), including a 2 km buffer between November and March (inclusive) unless in urgent circumstances (see CoT135 in F1.3.5 /F05).

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	incidences in the document of a section of text concerning red-throated diver being reused for common scoter and the species not having been changed.	As noted above for 078.18 and 078.18, Natural England have confirmed in the Risks and Issues Log (REP3-094) that the Applicants commitments allow for adverse effects on the Liverpool Bay SPA to be ruled out. Natural England note that to fully resolve the issue, they recommend that this information is used to update the relevant parts of the application, in particular the Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment, which the Applicants have committed to doing for Deadline 5.
AS-078 078.21	**Comments on offshore ornithology following the site visit (28 April 2025)** Natural England thank Morgan OWL/Morecambe OWL for a useful discussion around construction works in Liverpool Bay SPA in November and December. The discussion centred around the advice outlined above relating to the technical note. Following the meeting Morgan OWL/Morecambe OWL agreed to have further discussions with their engineers about reducing the number of contingency days required for any potential additional cable burial works in November/December. Natural England therefore awaits further consultation on this matter.	The Applicant has now committed to a full seasonal restriction on all construction activity and low order UXO clearance from November to March (inclusive) within the original Liverpool Bay SPA plus a 2 km buffer [REP2-05]. Additionally, the Applicants have made a further commitment at Deadline 4 that the Applicants will not plan routine O&M activities in the original Liverpool Bay SPA (as designated in 2010), including a 2 km buffer between November and March (inclusive) unless in urgent circumstances (see CoT135 in F1.3.5 /F05). As noted above for 078.18 and 078.18, Natural England have confirmed in the Risks and Issues Log (REP3-094) that the Applicants commitments allow for adverse effects on the Liverpool Bay SPA to be ruled out. Natural England note that to fully resolve the issue, they recommend that this information is used to update the relevant parts of the application, in particular the Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment, which the Applicants have committed to doing for Deadline 5.
Detailed Comments: Passage Birds at Landfall Technical Note		
AS-078 078.22	This technical note provides additional information on the potential impacts of construction activities during the passage and breeding periods of features of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA. Further information is provided on temporal and spatial usage of the passage features at landfall and use of Fairhaven Saltmarsh proposed mitigation area by passage features.	The Applicants note this response.
AS-078 078.23	**Comments on onshore ornithology following the site visit (28 April 2025)** We thank Morgan OWL/Morecambe OWL for a useful discussion on the mitigation areas and landfall site. We provided advice verbally on the additional information we require, which Morgan OWL/Morecambe OWL agreed to provide. Further written advice and a summary following the site visit is provided below:	The Applicants note this response.
AS-078 078.24	*Impacts to Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA* As stated previously in our Relevant Representations [RR-1601], it is Natural England's view that an AEoI on the Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA cannot be ruled out therefore further consideration and refinement of the mitigation hierarchy needs to be undertaken.	The Applicants refer Natural England to their response to RR1601H.52 in Annex 3.2.16 to Response to RR - Natural England (RR-1601) - Appendix H (Onshore and Intertidal Ornithology (PDA-023). The Applicants recognise that outstanding issues remain concerning the passage features of the Ribble and Alt SPA at the landfall. However, the Applicants remain fully committed to addressing these matters and to working collaboratively with Natural England to reach a resolution. In support of this commitment, the Applicants met with Natural England on 25 July 2025. Following Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2), the Applicants have submitted, at Deadline 4, a note providing clarification on the current position with Natural England concerning the potential for Adverse Effect on Integrity (Adverse effects on integrity (AEoI) (ISH2.12) and Passage Birds at Landfall Note (S_D4_18)).
AS-078 078.25	*Further advice on reducing impacts at the landfall* During the Teams call held on the 28th April, Natural England gave advice on mitigation options for the Project to implement at the landfall site to reduce potential impacts. We recommended that the Project should consider further options to reduce impacts at the working areas. For example, further consideration of screening equipment for the large machinery on site where possible and consideration of a suitable width of corridor for the landfall area which is off limits to the public. This could reduce some recreational disturbance if birds were able to feed in the space between machine disturbance and people disturbance which could further help to reduce energetic costs on the birds being temporarily displaced during construction. We also advised that the Project could have an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) or similar to undertake public engagement at the landfall site. We would expect to see a detailed plan on how the ECoW will engage with	The Applicants remain fully committed to addressing these matters and to working collaboratively with Natural England to reach a resolution. In support of this commitment, the Applicants met with Natural England on 25 July 2025.

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	members of the public to reduce impacts to birds. For example, directing members of the public on where to cross the construction corridor to have the least environmental impacts and avoiding walking near flocks of birds. It is not currently clear what the Worst Case Scenario (WCS) is with regards to number of seasons worked over during the landfall construction. The Project Description [AS-024] states that the WCS for the sequential option of landfall construction is 66 months. Natural England advise that the Project should refine the landfall construction period and if possible, undertake the works in a single season. Additionally, if one Project (i.e. Morgan or Morecambe) goes first, implement measures to ensure the impacts from the second project are reduced.	
AS-078 078.26	**Information on energetics** As discussed during the site visit, further information should be provided on the construction impacts to energetic costs. Natural England require this information to fully understand the impacts associated with the wider population and birds using the landfall site and Fairhaven saltmarsh.	The Applicants refer Natural England to the Passage Birds at Landfall Technical Note (S_D4_18) which explains why it is not possible to provide further information on the construction impacts to energetic costs. This position remains unchanged.
AS-078 078.27	**Roost package for Fairhaven saltmarsh** Natural England advise that it is essential for the Project to include further information on the roost management at Fairhaven saltmarsh. In particular, we advise the package should include detailed information on how recreational disturbance will be managed e.g. location of signs, location/timing of wardening activity. Consideration should also be given to the time needed to engage local communities and for birds to become familiarised with the site. The roost package should also include information regarding future management and adaptive monitoring of the site with regards to social and environmental elements. The package should also identify which birds are using the saltmarsh. For example, if there are more birds using that area than just those associated with the area of impact (i.e. the landfall site), addressing disturbance here could have wider benefits and at a wider population level which may contribute wider energetic savings. Following the site visit, agreement was reached with Morgan OWL/Morecambe OWL that updated technical notes relating to passage birds at landfall and further information relating to the temporary and permanent mitigation areas will be issued. Natural England therefore awaits further consultation on this matter.	The Applicants remain fully committed to addressing these matters and to working collaboratively with Natural England to reach a resolution. In support of this commitment, the Applicants met with Natural England on 25 July 2025.

7 Response to Natural England's Risk and Issues Log

7.1.1.1 The Applicants' comments on Natural England's (NE) Risk and Issue Log are presented in Table 7-2 to Table 7-12.

Table 7-1: NE's Risks and Issues Log colour coding

Description	Colour
Purple Note for Examiners and/or competent authority. May relate to DCO/DML	
Red Natural England considers that unless these issues are resolved it will have to advise that (in relation to any one of them, and as appropriate) it is not possible to ascertain beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not affect the integrity of an SAC/SPA/Ramsar and/or significantly hinder the conservation objectives of an MCZ and/or damage or destroy the interest features of a SSSI and/or comply fully with the Environmental Impact Assessment requirements. Addressing these concerns may require the following: • new baseline or survey data; and/or • significant revisions to baseline characterisation and/or impact modelling and/or • significant design changes; and/or • significant mitigation In addition, Natural England may use this category to highlight where there is a significant risk that an issue will not be sufficiently addressed within the Examination timescales. Consequently, issues that start out as Amber may progress to Red in the latter stages of the examination.	
Amber Natural England does not agree with the applicant's position or approach and consider that this could make a material difference to the outcome of the decision-making process for this project. Natural England considers that these matters may be resolved through: • provision of additional evidence or justification to support conclusions; and/or • revisions to impact assessment methodology and/or assessment conclusions; and/or • minor to moderate revisions to impact modelling; and/or • well-designed mitigation measures that are adequately secured through the draft DCO/dML and/or • amendments to draft plans If these issues are not addressed or are unlikely to be resolved by the end of the Examination, then they may become a Red risk as set out above.	
Yellow Natural England doesn't agree with the Applicant's position or approach. We would ideally have liked this to be addressed but are satisfied that for this particular project it is unlikely to make a material difference to our advice or the outcome of the decision-making process and would not expect these matters to be an ongoing focus of the examination. However, we reserve the right to revise our opinion should further evidence be presented. It should be noted by interested parties that just because these issues/comments are not raised as significant concerns in this instance, it should not be understood or inferred that Natural England would be of the same view in other cases or circumstances. Once a Risk or Issue has been categorised as yellow, Natural England will not make further comment on the matter at subsequent deadlines, unless specifically requested to through ExA Questions. These rows will then be hidden at subsequent deadlines in order to rationalise the risk and issues log.	

Description	Colour
Green Natural England is in broad agreement with the Applicant's approach and has no significant outstanding concerns. As above, we reserve the right to revise our opinion should new evidence be presented. Once a Risk or Issue has been categorised as green, Natural England will not make further comment on the matter at subsequent deadlines, unless specifically requested to through ExA Questions. These rows will then be hidden at subsequent deadlines in order to rationalise the risk and issues log.	

7.2 Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS)

Table 7-2: Responses to Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS)

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	NE Rel Rep RAG rating and D1	Applicants' comment at Deadline 3	Update on Progression at Deadline 3	RAG D3	Applicants' comment at Deadline 4
Taken from NE's Relevant and Written Representations						
Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets - Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS)						
NE1	***Development Consent Order (DCO and deemed Marine Licence (dML)*** Definition of commence with respect to the offshore works. This definition is linked directly to the definition of offshore preparation works and excludes the works detailed under offshore preparation from the definition of commence. We would note that this definition of commence is different to those used and accepted under a wide number of consented offshore wind projects. The definition of commence and offshore preparations works within the DCO and all three DMLs must be amended. It is possible this issue could be progressed following amendments requested.		Natural England did not provide an update to the PADSS at Deadline 2, therefore the Applicants' response to the Relevant Representations and at Deadline 2 still apply, which is included below for ease of reference: Please see the Applicants' response to row RI_A1 in Table 2.3 of REP2-034. The Applicants and Natural England will be meeting on the 22 July 2025 to review the PADSS and Risks and Issues log with respect to offshore matters, which will allow the parties to provide updated positions at any issue specific hearings in week commencing 28 July and at Deadline 4.	Resolved. NE welcomes the updated wording for the definition of "commence" in Article 2 (a) of the DCO and dMLs 1 and 2.		The Applicants welcome resolution of this point at Deadline 3.
NE2	Duration of submitting pre-construction plans before construction begins. Due to the increasing complexity of construction of large offshore works, the proposed four month consultation period is no longer appropriate. The Applicant should amend the dMLs to allow for documents to be submitted at least six months prior to commencement. It is possible this issue could be progressed following amendments requested.		Natural England did not provide an update to the PADSS at Deadline 2, therefore the Applicants response to the Relevant Representations and at Deadline 2 still apply, which is included below for ease of reference: Please see the Applicants response to row RI_A2 in Table 2.3 of REP2-034. The Applicants and Natural England will be meeting on the 22 July 2025 to review the PADSS and Risks and Issues log with respect to offshore matters, which will allow the parties to provide updated positions at any issue specific	Resolved. NE welcomes the update to the DCO Schedules 14 and 15 Part 2 Condition 19 (1) requiring pre-construction documentation to be submitted at least six months prior to commencement.		The Applicants welcome the resolution of this point at Deadline 3.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	NE Rel Rep RAG rating and D1	Applicants' comment at Deadline 3	Update on Progression at Deadline 3	RAG D3	Applicants' comment at Deadline 4
Taken from NE's Relevant and Written Representations						
Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets - Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS)						
			hearings in week commencing 28 July and at Deadline 4.			
NE3	***Benthic Ecology and Physical Processes*** Worst Case Scenario (WCS) during construction, operation and maintenance. Natural England advise that there are a number of potential impacts both on benthic ecology and physical processes which have not been adequately considered or assessed within the Environmental Statement (ES). Natural England advises that the ES and where relevant, Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) assessment, are updated to consider all potential pathways of effect on intertidal and subtidal benthic habitats. It is possible this issue could be progressed if the Applicant follows SNCB advice.		Natural England did not provide an update to the PADSS at Deadline 2, therefore the Applicants response to the Relevant Representations and at Deadline 2 still apply, which is included below for ease of reference: The Applicants have responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.41 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014) and have provided detailed responses with respect to the MDS assessed, in RR-1601.B.5 to RR-1601.B.11 (PDA-016) and RR-1601.C.7 to RR-1601.C.18 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017). The Applicants and Natural England will be meeting on the 22 July 2025 to review the PADSS and Risks and Issues log with respect to offshore matters, which will allow the parties to provide updated positions at any issue specific hearings in week commencing 28 July and at Deadline 4.	No change.		The Applicants' position remains as outlined in RR-1601.C.1 of their response to Natural England (PDA-017) that all of the relevant potential impact pathways on intertidal and subtidal benthic habitats have been identified and the MDS has been defined as appropriate to each potential impact, activity and receptor. The identified impacts are assessed in Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) and in the Marine Conservation Zone Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) with further details on construction scenarios provided in in the Rule 9 – ES assessment of Construction Scenarios (AS-070). The MDS for most impacts to benthic ecology (except those drawing on the physical processes assessments) are for the sequential construction scenario. The MDS for physical processes is concurrent construction as recovery between phases is beneficial for coastal processes. The Applicants have also provided detailed responses in the Applicants response to Natural England's response to ExQ1 against ExQ1 7.1.4 and 7.1.6, which have been incorporated, where appropriate, in this response. The Applicants have provided responses to RI_B5, and RI_B8 to RI_B11 with respect to the MDS and scope of assessments relating to physical processes. The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical Processes (APP-042) for submission at Deadline 5 to include all additional clarifications/justifications provided in submissions at previous deadlines to address Natural England's comments relating to these matters. The Applicants also highlight their responses to comments RI_C7, RI_C8, RI_C10, RI_C11, RI_C13, RI_C14, RI_C15, RI_C16, RI_C17, RI_C18, RI_C19, RI_C20 and RI_C21 which address NE's points regarding the benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology maximum design scenario (MDS) and conclude that the assessments conducted have adequately considered the potential impact of the Transmission Assets on this receptor group. The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) and the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) for submission at Deadline 5 to include all additional clarifications/justifications provided in submissions at previous deadlines to address Natural England's comments relating to the MDS.
NE4	Removal of infrastructure at the decommissioning stage. Natural England is concerned that there is currently no commitment to the removal of cable/scour protection at end of project life. Natural England advise that the Applicant should include a commitment to remove cable/scour protection at end of project life and this should be secured within the DCO.		Natural England did not provide an update to the PADSS at Deadline 2, therefore the Applicants response to the Relevant Representations and at Deadline 2 still apply, which is included below for ease of reference: The Applicants have responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-	No change.		The Applicants note Natural England's approval of the removal of 'rock dump' as a cable protection option in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022) and Project Description (REP2-008) as set out in the Natural England response to ExQ1 (REP3-095) question 7.1.5. With regard to Natural England's request that as a minimum, they would expect to see an update to the draft DCO to prohibit rock dump in the Fylde MCZ (response to question 7.1.5 in REP3-095), the Applicants have updated the draft DCO submitted at Deadline 4 (C1/F06) to include no 'rock dump' in Condition 18(e) of Schedule 14 and 15 to align with the commitment already made in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022).

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	NE Rel Rep RAG rating and D1	Applicants' comment at Deadline 3	Update on Progression at Deadline 3	RAG D3	Applicants' comment at Deadline 4
Taken from NE's Relevant and Written Representations						
Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets - Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS)						
	It is possible this issue could be progressed if the Applicant follows SNCB advice.		1601.42 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014). The Applicants would also draw attention to the updated outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan submitted at Deadline 2 (REP2-022), which sd 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants and Natural England will be meeting on the 22 July 2025 to review the PADSS and Risks and Issues log with respect to offshore matters, which will allow the parties to provide updated positions at any issue specific hearings in week commencing 28 July and at Deadline 4.			Regarding the requested commitment to decommission all infrastructure and cable protection (with the exception of cable crossings) within the Fylde MCZ, the Applicants responded previously to this point within RR-1601.42 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014). As detailed in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022), the Transmission Assets design is considering multiple cable protection options. The Outline CSIP (REP2-022) identifies that cable burial is the preferred option for cable protection where practicable (CoT54) and should cable protection be required within the Fylde MCZ, it will be designed to be removable (CoT108) with the requirement for removal agreed with stakeholders and regulators at the time of decommissioning (CoT109). However, the MDS for permanent habitat loss in the decommissioning phase is for all infrastructure (scour protection, cable protection, cables and cable crossings) to be left *in situ,* so the worst case has been assessed in section 2.11.5 of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045). The Applicants will also update Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) and the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) for submission at Deadline 5 to include all these updated commitments. The use of cable/scour protection, where required, will be evaluated and further considered post-consent in Detailed CSIPs, focusing on both engineering suitability and environmental recoverability. The CSIPs are part of the Offshore Construction Method Statements that are secured in the Draft DCO (AS-004) in: • Condition 18(1)(e)(i) of Schedule 14 for the Morgan Offshore Wind Project: Transmission Assets; and • Condition 18(1)(e)(i) of Schedule 15 for the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm: Transmission Assets. The Applicants will submit a draft decommissioning programme to the Secretary of State for approval as required by the Energy Act 2004 prior to the commencement of construction . This is standard practice for offshore wind development and the decommissioning programme will be updated throughout the assets' lifespan to incorporate changing best practice and new technologies. Offshore decommissioning is secured under Requirement 21 of Schedule 2A and Schedule 2B of the draft DCO (AS-004). The Applicants position is aligned with tthat of the Morgan Generation Assets and Morecambe Generation Assets DCO applications and the recently made Orders for the Mona Offshore Wind Project and Sheringham and Dudgeon Extension Projects, the latter of which also has an export cable corridor overlapping an MCZ. The Applicants and Natural England met on 22 July 2025 to review the PADSS and Risks and Issues log with respect to offshore matters, which allowed the Applicants to clarify their position regarding the removal of cable protection/scour protection from the Fylde MCZ at decommissioning during the issue specific hearing on 30th July 2025. It was noted that the Applicants and Natural England are not agreed on this matter.

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Taken from NE's Relevant and Written Representations						
Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets - Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS)						
NE5	Lack of cable protection location and design information. There is currently insufficient information on the anticipated location, extent and design of cable protection measures placed along the Export Cable Corridor (ECC). Therefore, we are unable to fully understand the potential impacts of cable protection on sediment transport pathways, particularly within Fylde MCZ. Natural England advise that where possible, further information is provided on the anticipated location, extent and design of cable protection measures. Potential resolution. This is subject to the Applicant providing further information on cable protection location and design.		Natural England did not provide an update to the PADSS at Deadline 2, therefore the Applicants response to the Relevant Representations and at Deadline 2 still apply, which is included below for ease of reference: The Applicants have responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.43 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014). The Applicants and Natural England will be meeting on the 22 July 2025 to review the PADSS and Risks and Issues log with respect to offshore matters, which will allow the parties to provide updated positions at any issue specific hearings in week commencing 28 July and at Deadline 4.	No change.		The Applicants' position remains as outlined in response to comment RR.1601.43 on the location and design of cable protection (PDA-014). Details of cable protection material and volumes for the Transmission Assets are provided in sections 3.12.6 of Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description (REP2-008) with further details provided in the Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan (CSIP) (APP-220). These detail a Maximum Design Scenario (MDS) for: • up to 51 crossings (Table 3.8 in Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description (REP2-008)); • the location of crossings are shown in Volume 1, Annex 3.1: Offshore Crossing Schedule ((APP-025); • requirements for cable protection due to ground conditions (Table 3.7 in Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description (REP2-008)); and • Within the Fylde MCZ, there are up to 4 cable crossings (up to 4,000 m^2 of cable protection) and a 3% cable protection contingency for ground conditions (26,400 m^2 of cable protection) as detailed in section 7.2 and section 7.3 in the Outline CSIP (APP-220)). The use of cable protection for ground conditions, where required, will be further evaluated and considered post-consent in the CSIPs, following further post-consent and pre-construction surveys, secured as part of the Construction Method Statements. The Offshore Construction Method Statements are secured in the Draft DCO (AS-004) in: • Condition 18(1)(e) of Schedule 14 for the Morgan Offshore Wind Project: Transmission Assets; and • Condition 18(1)(e) of Schedule 15 for the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm: Transmission Assets. As outlined in Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical Processes (APP-042) and Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal ecology (APP-045), the physical process and benthic ecology assessments have been undertaken on the MDS as presented within Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description (REP2-008) with the assessment of the associated impacts for sediment transport pathways identified as being of negligible to minor adverse significance, which is not significant in EIA terms. The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical Processes (APP-042) Chapter to capture the related information contained within the outline CSIP (APP-220) and CBRA (APP-219) to address Natural England comments. As agreed with NE this will be submitted at Deadline 5. As outlined in the Applicants' response to RR.1601.43 (PDA-014), the Applicants consider that a precautionary but realistic approach has been adopted for the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019). The approach assumes that all of the long-term habitat loss associated with cable protection for ground conditions may occur within either the subtidal mud or subtidal sand feature. As outlined in the Outline Offshore Cable Specification and Installation Plan (CSIP) (APP-220) as part of the detailed design process pre-construction survey data will be used to inform the final routing of the cable, any micro-siting requirements and areas where there is

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Taken from NE's Relevant and Written Representations						
Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets - Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS)						
						a higher risk of remedial works such as external cable protection. The Applicants would highlight that a new commitment has also been added to the updated Commitments Register submitted at Deadline 4 (F1.5.3/F05) as CoT134 which states that "*As part of the detailed design process, micro-siting of the offshore export cables within the offshore export cable corridors will be considered where successful burial could pose a challenge or where a higher risk of remedial works such as external cable protection may be required.*" At this stage in the consenting process, however, the Applicants are unable to refine these assumptions further. Following detailed design post-consent, the exact compensation requirements may be refined, in consultation with stakeholders, which would then inform MEEB compensation figures if it is deemed to be required by the Secretary of State. With regards to the cable protection required in the Fylde MCZ for the cable crossing, the Applicants provided a Stage 2 MCZ Assessment, including a without prejudice, in-principle Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) Plan, at Deadline 1 (REP1-059) which updated the MDS for long term habitat loss of each of the features to account for the cable crossing occurring only within the subtidal mud feature. The Applicants will update the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) for submission at Deadline 5 to include the update to the MDS for the subtidal mud feature and all relevant new commitments for the Fylde MCZ. Furthermore the following new commitments have been made at Deadline 4: • A commitment that no cable/scour protection shall be permanently deployed in the intertidal between MLWS and MHWS (CoT133) (updated Commitments Register submitted at Deadline 4 (F1.5.3/F05)). • A commitment to benthic community recovery specific monitoring in the Fylde MCZ through pre and post construction benthic community sampling to monitor for temporal and spatial recovery (Offshore IPMP at Deadline 4 (J20/F03)). In addition, the updated IPMP includes monitoring of the potential colonisation by Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) following construction activities within the Fylde MCZ. Commitment to limit the development of cable/scour protection in the O&M phase to the first ten years / limit of the MDS (whichever is first) outside the Fylde MCZ and the first two years inside the MCZ. Additionally, at Deadline 4 the Applicants have submitted the ABPmer report (Annex to Applicants response to MMO and NE submission at Deadline 3: Assessment of Seabed Level Vertical Variability for Morgan Offshore Wind Farm - Appendix C) regarding the beach levels that underpin the assessment of the intertidal bed level trends (S_D4_19)The Applicants response to Natural England's response to ExQ1 submitted at Deadline 4 (S_D4_2.6), specifically the Applicants response to question 7.1.6 is also particularly relevant to this matter and provides additional clarification in respect of the points made by Natural England.
NE6	Mitigation measures for Section 41 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 Habitats.		Natural England did not provide an update to the PADSS at Deadline 2, therefore the Applicants response to the	No change.		The Applicants have responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.44 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014) and RR-1601.C.4 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).

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Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets - Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS)						
	Natural England notes that no further mitigation in relation to physical processes or benthic receptors has been proposed. Additionally, there is no consideration for relevant NERC habitats. Natural England advises that impacts to priority habitats listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) are avoided and due consideration is demonstrated. We advise that relevant Application documents should be updated accordingly, and this is secured within the DCO/DMLs. It is possible this issue could be progressed if the Applicant follows SNCB advice.		Relevant Representations and at Deadline 2 still apply, which is included below for ease of reference: The Applicants have responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.44 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014). The Applicants and Natural England will be meeting on the 22 July 2025 to review the PADSS and Risks and Issues log with respect to offshore matters, which will allow the parties to provide updated positions at any issue specific hearings in week commencing 28 July and at Deadline 4.			During a meeting between the Applicants and Natural England on 22 July 2025, this matter was discussed, where the Applicants explained their position that a commitment to avoid the most sensitive and or priority habitats designated under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 was not justified or required due to the Applicants having taken all reasonable measures (via project design changes and commitments) to minimise impacts to all benthic habitats, including habitats of principal importance. Natural England requested the Applicants to set out their case clearly demonstrating how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied and the commitments made, which the Applicants have set out below. **Avoid** The avoid principle (i.e. the first step in the mitigation hierarchy) was first applied through the Offshore Export Cable Corridor routing exercise which sought to identify the shortest route from the Agreement for Lease areas to the selected landfall location at Lytham St Annes, whilst avoiding environmental sensitivities, such as MCZs and SACs, as well as third-party/existing seabed users. The Offshore Export Cable Corridor routing exercise was driven by consideration of the guiding principles described in Volume 1, Chapter 4: Site Selection and Consideration of Alternatives of the ES (APP-030) and The Crown Estate (TCE) Cable Route Protocol (TCE, 2021). The Offshore Export Cable Corridor search area was defined to minimise interaction with any designated sites, avoiding the Shell Flat and Lune Deep SAC and the West of Walney MCZ and West of Copeland MZC to the north. The Fylde MCZ could not, however, be avoided entirely due to its north-south extent between the Generation Assets and the point of interconnection at Penwortham. Routing around the Fylde MCZ to reach landfall location at Lytham St Anne's was not feasible due to the existing cables that run east/west through the MCZ which would need to be crossed in the shallow waters between the east edge of the MCZ and the coast. **Reduce / minimise** The reduce/minimise principle (i.e. the second step on the mitigation hierarchy) was then applied. As outlined in Volume 1, Chapter 4: Site Selection and Consideration of Alternatives of the ES (APP-030), the final offshore export cable route was designed to cross the Fylde MCZ at its the narrow (i.e. to reduce impacts). Refinements were also made to the project description (Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description of the ES (REP2-008) post-PEIR to significantly reduce the extent of long term habitat loss and temporary habitat disturbance within the Fylde MCZ as follows. • Post-PEIR, the MDS for cable protection outside the Fylde MCZ required for ground conditions was reduced from 20% to 10% for the Morgan offshore export cables and from 15% to 10% for the Morecambe offshore export cables. • Post-PEIR, the MDS for cable protection in the Fylde MCZ required for ground conditions was reduced from 20% to 3% contingency for the Morgan offshore export cables and from 15% to 3% contingency for the Morecambe offshore export cables. • Post-PEIR, the proportion of cables outside the Fylde MCZ requiring sandwave clearance was reduced from 60% to 9% for the Morgan

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Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets - Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS)						
						offshore export cables and 30% to 9% for the Morecambe offshore export cables. • Post-PEIR, the proportion of cables within the Fylde MCZ requiring sandwave clearance was reduced from 60% to 5% for the Morgan offshore export cables and 30% to 5% for the Morecambe offshore export cables. • Post-PEIR the width of disturbance associated with sandwave clearance was reduced from 104 m to 60 m for the Morgan offshore export cables and from 104 m to 48 m for the Morecambe offshore export cables. • Post-PEIR the width of disturbance associated with boulder clearance for the Morecambe offshore export cables was reduced from 25 m to 20 m. • Post-PEIR the offshore substation platforms (OSPs) and interconnector cables were removed from the project design. • Post-PEIR, the requirement for a Morgan Offshore Booster Station was removed from the project design. • Post-PEIR the MDS for the total length of offshore export cables within the Fylde MCZ has reduced from 94.8 km to 88 km (i.e. 16 km for each of the four Morgan offshore export cables and 12 km for each of the two Morecambe offshore export cables) as a result of further design and route identification. • Post-PEIR the MDS for the volume of spoil arising from sandwave clearance within the Fylde MCZ has reduced from 1,268,642 m^3 (previously calculated as a proportion of the overall spoil generated for the Transmission Assets) to 270,000 m^3. The offshore export cable route was designed to minimise the number of crossings with existing cables, and therefore long term habitat loss, within the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants attempted to move the crossings outwith the Fylde MCZ however they were limited by existing infrastructure (i.e. Hibernia Atlantic telecoms cable which runs north west/south east to the west of the Transmission Assets just outside of the Fylde MCZ) and engineering constraints (e.g. the need to cross the Lanis 1 and Havhingsten telecoms cable at a 90 degree angle). As such, whilst the Morecambe offshore export cable crossings were able to be pushed westward beyond the boundary of the MCZ (i.e. no cable crossings are required for the Morecambe offshore export cables within the Fylde MCZ), the Morgan offshore export cables would need to cross the Lanis 1 cable within the Fylde MCZ. Therefore, the Applicants have sought to reduce the parameters of the crossing, such as length which was reduced from 20% to 3% contingency for the Morgan offshore export cables and from 15% to 3% contingency for the Morecambe offshore export cables to minimise its impact. In addition to changes made to the project design (embedded mitigation) to minimise impacts, the Applicants have also committed to a number of measures to further reduce impacts to benthic habitats, including NERC priority habitats, as follows: • CoT45: ensure that no more than 5% reduction in water depth (referenced to Chart Datum) will occur at any point on the offshore export

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						cable corridor route without prior written approval from the licensing authority. • CoT47: limits the extent of cable protection to 3% of the offshore export cable route within the Fylde MCZ (excluding cable crossings) and sandwave clearance up to 5% of the offshore export cable route within the Fylde MCZ. Material arising from sandwave clearance in the Fylde MCZ will be deposited within the Fylde MCZ. • CoT108: commits the Applicants to ensuring cable protection installed in the Fylde MCZ is designed to be removable • CoT109: outlines the requirement for removal in the Fylde MCZ to be agreed with stakeholders and regulators at the time of decommissioning. • CoT114: requires that all permanent infrastructure located between MLWS and MHWS will be buried to a target depth of 3 m. • CoT116: ensures that material arising from sandwave clearance will be deposited in close proximity to the works. • CoT117: No walking jack-ups within the Fylde MCZ. Additionally, the following new commitments have been made at Deadline 4: • The draft DCO (C1/F06) has been updated to include *'no rock dumping within Fylde MCZ'* under condition 18(e) of Schedule 14 and 15. • Secured commitment (in the Commitments Register) that "*No cable/scour protection shall be permanently deployed in the intertidal area between Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) and Mean High Water Springs (MHWS).*" (see CoT133, F1.5.3/F05). • Secured commitment (in the Commitments Register) that "*As part of the detailed design process, micro-siting of the offshore export cables within the offshore export cable corridors will be considered where successful burial could pose a challenge or where a higher risk of remedial works such as external cable protection may be required.*"" (see CoT134, F1.5.3/F05). All benthic IEFs, including those identified as habitats of principal importance in England listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006, have been fully assessed in relation to the impacts of the Transmission Assets in section 2.11 of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045). This assessment concluded that all benthic subtidal IEFs will recover following construction activities. Having incorporated the embedded mitigation and commitments, together with the predicted recovery of the benthic subtidal IEFS, the benthic ecology assessment presented in Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) and the physical processes assessment presented in Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical processes (APP-042) concluded no likely significant impacts. The Applicants consider that they have taken all reasonable measures (via project design changes and commitments) to minimise impacts to all benthic habitats, including habitats of principal importance in England listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. The Applicants do not, therefore, consider that further mitigation to avoid these habitats is justified or required. Further, the

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Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets - Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS)						
						Applicants do not consider that there is precedent in the offshore wind industry, or other offshore industries, for avoiding the sedimentary habitats recorded within the Transmission Assets and neither would it possible to do so given their widespread distribution within the benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology study area. The Applicants also highlight that biogenic or geogenic reef features were not identified as present within the site-specific surveys (section 2.6.3, Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045)). As agreed with NE,Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) and Volume 1, Chapter 1: Physical Processes (APP-042) will be updated to include the new commitments made at Deadline 4 and set out above.
NE7	Lasting habitat loss/change from the placement of cable protection. Natural England disagrees with the Applicant that 3.04ha of lasting habitat change/loss of subtidal sand and subtidal mud interest features from Fylde MCZ from the placement of cable protection will maintain the conservation objectives of the site. We advise that the Project is likely to cause lasting impacts on benthic features within Fylde MCZ. Every effort should be made to reduce impacts through the adoption of robust mitigation measures.		Natural England did not provide an update to the PADSS at Deadline 2, therefore the Applicants response to the Relevant Representations and at Deadline 2 still apply, which is included below for ease of reference: The Applicants have responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.45 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014). The Applicants' provided a Stage 2 MCZ Assessment, including a without prejudice, in-principle Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) Plan, at Deadline 1 (REP1-059). The Applicants and Natural England will be meeting on the 22 July 2025 to review the PADSS and Risks and Issues log with respect to offshore matters, which will allow the parties to provide updated positions at any issue specific hearings in week commencing 28 July and at Deadline 4.	"Resolved. The Applicant has undertaken a Stage 2 MCZ Assessment and without prejudice MEEB and submitted these into Examination at Deadline 1. Therefore this issue has been resolved at Deadline 2. Please note other comments relating to the MCZ assessment are not resolved. This comment has specifically been resolved as the Applicant has provided the documents requested. NE have provided further comments on the Applicants' In-Principle MEEB proposal in 'Tab J Benthic Compensation' of this R&I Log and Appendix J of our Deadline 2 submission. "		The Applicants welcome the confirmation this issue is resolved at Deadline 3.
NE8	***Fish and Shellfish Ecology*** Long term loss of supporting habitat and potential loss of prey species (sandeel).		Natural England did not provide an update to the PADSS at Deadline 2, therefore the	In progress. Natural England notes the justification in the Applicants response to NE's Relevant Representations comment		The Applicants welcome the comments from Natural England and have agreed to make the necessary edits to the Information to Support an

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	Dynamics between predator prey relationships for piscivorous birds and sand eel could be impacted due to loss of prey species. Natural England advise that the loss of prey species (sandeel) due to long term habitat loss (from scour/cable protection) of supporting habitat should be assessed and updated in the final ES chapter. It is possible this issue could be progressed with further provision of information.		Applicants response to the Relevant Representations and at Deadline 2 still apply, which is included below for ease of reference: The Applicants have responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within the response RR-1601.46 (PDA-014). The Applicants and Natural England will be meeting on the 22 July 2025 to review the PADSS and Risks and Issues log with respect to offshore matters, which will allow the parties to provide updated positions at any issue specific hearings in week commencing 28 July and at Deadline 4.	RR-1601.49 in relation to Offshore Ornithology and long-term loss of habitat supporting prey species for the features of Liverpool Bay SPA in PDA-014. We also note the response to 1601.46 in relation to Fish and Shellfish Ecology. To fully resolve this issue the quantification utilised in RR-1601.49 should also be applied in the context of suitable spawning areas for prey species across the cable corridor within the Liverpool Bay SPA which could be lost during construction. This information should be updated in the relevant parts of the application, in particular the ISAA.		Appropriate Assessment Part Three – Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar Site assessments (APP-017) for Deadline 5.
NE9	Ribble Estuary MCZ assessment. Natural England do not agree that smelt should be screened out, further assessment is required as the activity may be capable of affecting the protected feature of the MCZ. There is potential for electro-magnetic field (EMF) to cause barrier effects that hinder smelt movements in and out of the estuary. Complete an assessment on potential EMF impacts.		Natural England did not provide an update to the PADSS at Deadline 2, therefore the Applicants response to the Relevant Representations and at Deadline 2 still apply, which is included below for ease of reference: The Applicants have responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within the response RR-1601.47 (PDA-014).	No change.		The Applicants acknowledge the uncertainties associated with electromagnetic field impacts on fish behaviour, including smelt. However, little uncertainty exists concerning the physical dissipation of EMFs with increasing distance from the cable, as set out in section 3.11.7 of Volume 2, Chapter 3: Fish and shellfish ecology (APP-048). As the cables under the Ribble Estuary will be buried to depths of 7-45 m, there will be no detectable EMF emissions into the Ribble Estuary (beyond natural background levels). Therefore, any proposed monitoring of EMFs would not be proportionate to the negligible risk of EMF emissions causing barrier effects to smelt at the Ribble Estuary crossing. The Applicants would also note that the MMO and the Environment Agency have confirmed they have no concerns with respect to effects of EMF from the Ribble Estuary crossing on smelt (see REP1-086 and REP1-076, respectively).
NE10	***Marine Mammals*** UXO clearance UXO clearance is included as a licenced activity in the DCO/marine licence (which includes high order clearance). We advise that a separate licence is sought for UXO clearance due to the lack of information available and the over precaution		Natural England did not provide an update to the PADSS at Deadline 2, however this point has been raised by Natural England at Deadline 2 and the Applicants have responded at row RI_A5 below. The Applicants and Natural England will be meeting on the 22 July 2025 to review the PADSS and	No change.		The Applicants will continue to engage with the Natural England on this matter, however it is the Applicants' position that it is appropriate and justified to include UXO clearance (limited to low order clearance) activities within the draft DCO (REP3-009). The Applicants have included all necessary activities for the construction and operation and maintenance of the Transmission Assets in the application for development consent, to ensure a comprehensive application, and all such activities have been subject to a robust assessment process. This includes UXO clearance activities, with suitable mitigation secured (Outline Marine Mammal Mitigation Protocol (REP2-026) and a commitment to not clea UXO within

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	that must be incorporated into the impact assessment at this stage. Natural England advise that UXO clearance should be authorised under a standalone marine licence post consent and removed from the draft DCO. It is possible this issue could be progressed by removing UXO clearance from the DCO/DML.		Risks and Issues log with respect to offshore matters, which will allow the parties to provide updated positions at any issue specific hearings in week commencing 28 July and at Deadline 4.			the Liverpool Bay SPA between Nov – Mar (inclusive) as set out under CoT130 in Commitments Register (REP3-013)). Including only low order UXO clearance activities within the draft DCO, and appropriate controls under Condition 20 of Schedule 14 and 15 (REP3-009), is intended to remove the need to apply for and obtain a further licence post-consent and prior to construction, assisting with the expeditious delivery of the Transmission Assets project, contributing to UK Government targets for Net Zero. This is consistent with the approach taken for the Morgan Generation project which is awaiting determiantion and the recently consented Mona Offshore Wind Project.
NE11	***Offshore Ornithology*** No assessment of long-term loss of habitat supporting prey species for the offshore ornithological features of Liverpool Bay Special Protection Area (SPA). The Applicant has not screened in long term loss of habitat supporting prey species (due to scour/cable protection) for the offshore ornithological features of Liverpool Bay SPA as an impact pathway for Likely Significant Effect (LSE). The Applicant should include an assessment of the indirect effect of long-term habitat loss due to scour/cable protection for prey species of the offshore ornithological features of Liverpool Bay SPA. It is possible this issue could be progressed with further provision of information.		Natural England did not provide an update to the PADSS at Deadline 2, therefore the Applicants response to the Relevant Representations and at Deadline 2 still apply, which is included below for ease of reference: Please see the Applicants' response to RR-1601.49 in PDA-014. The Applicants and Natural England will be meeting on the 22 July 2025 to review the PADSS and Risks and Issues log with respect to offshore matters, which will allow the parties to provide updated positions at any issue specific hearings in week commencing 28 July and at Deadline 4.	In progress. Natural England are satisfied with the justification in the Applicant's response to NE's Relevant Representations [PDA-014], they explained that the total area of potential habitat loss is considered small enough to rule out this impact pathway. Natural England are satisfied that the additional information on the predicted habitat loss in PDA-014 would allow adverse effects on the Liverpool Bay SPA to be ruled out. To fully resolve the issue, we recommend that this information is used to update the relevant parts of the application, in particular the Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment.		The Applicants welcome the decision to resolve this issue at Deadline 3 and the Applicants will update and submit the relevant documents at Deadline 5. Additionally, the Applicants highlight that a new commitment has been made at Deadline 4 stating that "*The Applicants will not plan routine O&M activities in the original Liverpool Bay SPA (as designated in 2010), including a 2 km buffer between November and March (inclusive) unless in urgent circumstances."* (see CoT135 in the updated Commitments Register (F1.5.3/F05)).
NE12	"Assessment and conclusion of no adverse effect on site integrity for the red-throated diver and common scoter features of Liverpool Bay SPA. Natural England do not agree that an adverse effect on site integrity for the red-throated diver and common scoter features of Liverpool Bay SPA can be ruled out due to the displacement and disturbance impacts of the Project in-combination with other projects during the sensitive winter period. The Project's impact can be removed by the Applicant committing to a full restriction on		Please see the Applicants' response to RR-1601.50 in PDA-014. Please also see the Applicants response to row NE19. The 'Measures to minimise disturbance to marine mammals and rafting birds from vessels' (REP2-025) and Commitment Register (REP2-010) and draft DCO (REP2-004) submitted at Deadline 2, detail the Project's commitment to seasonal	Resolved. The Applicant has now committed to a restriction on all construction activity and UXO clearance from November to March (inclusive) within the original Liverpool Bay SPA boundary plus a 2km buffer. This addresses Natural England's concerns and AEoI can now be ruled out for the red-throated diver and common scoter features of the SPA.		The Applicants welcome the resolution of this issue at Deadline 3.

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	construction activity within the wintering months of November-March inclusive. Potential resolution. This is subject to the Applicant bringing forward an appropriate seasonal restriction to address the potential impacts to the species.		restrictions within the Liverpool Bay SPA. In summary, the commitment is as follows: • CoT111: Development of, and adherence to, an offshore Environmental Management Plan(s) which will include Measures to minimise disturbance to marine mammals and rafting birds from vessels. The Measures to minimise disturbance to marine mammals and rafting birds from vessels includes timing restriction on all offshore export cable installation activities between November and March (inclusive) within the original boundary of the Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA (as designated in 2010) and including a 2 km buffer, unless otherwise agreed with the MMO, in consultation with Natural England. The commitment is secured via DCO Schedule 14 (Marine Licence 1: Morgan Offshore Wind Project Transmission Assets) Part 2 – Condition 18(1)(f) (Pre-construction plans and documentation) and DCO Schedule 15 (Marine Licence 2: Morecambe Offshore Wind Farm Transmission Assets), Part 2 – 18(1)(f) (Pre-construction plans and documentation). • CoT130: No clearance of unexploded ordnance (UXO) will be undertaken within Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA between November and March (inclusive). This is secured via DCO Schedule 14 (Marine Licence 1: Morgan Offshore Wind Project Transmission Assets) Part 2 –			

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			Condition 18(1)(f) (Pre-construction plans and documentation) and DCO Schedule 15 (Marine Licence 2: Morecambe Offshore Wind Farm Transmission Assets), Part 2 – 18(1)(f) (Pre-construction plans and documentation) Additionally, the following measures are included in the Measures to Minimise Disturbance to Marine Mammals and Rafting Birds from vessels (REP2-025) and applied, wherever possible, during transit through Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA and out to 2 km from the Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA boundary to and from port and works areas, in line with Natural England's Best Practice Protocol for Vessels in Red Throated Diver SPAs guidance on selecting routes that avoid known aggregations of birds: • maintaining direct transit routes (to minimise transit distances through areas used by divers); and • avoidance of over-revving of engines (to minimise noise disturbance). Specific measures to minimise disturbance to rafting birds (specifically common scoter and red-throated diver as features of the Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA) will also be implemented as follows: • the over-wintering period when red-throated diver and common scoter will most likely to be present in highest numbers in the areas of the Transmission Assets is from 1 November to 31 March; therefore, in order to			

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			minimise disturbance to ornithological receptors, offshore export cable installation will not take place from 1 November to 31 March (inclusive) within the Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA 2010 Boundary including a 2 km buffer unless otherwise agreed with the MMO, in consultation with Natural England.			
NE13	***Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation*** Impacts to sand dune Lytham St Annes SSSI features. Issues remain around certain features particularly changes to the water table, dewatering effects during construction using Transition Joint Bays (TJB) and the impacts on dune slack vegetation. The Applicant needs to more thoroughly assess the impacts on dune slack vegetation and consider a more precautionary approach with regards to the recoverability / resilience of the dune slacks relating to dewatering effects. It is possible this issue could be progressed with further provision of information including additional monitoring of water table pre- and post- construction and sufficient baseline data.		Further information has been provided to supplement the Applicants' response at Procedural Deadline A RR-1601.G 1601.G.1 (PDA-014 and PDA-021). This information includes an Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment (S_D3_6) informed by existing hydrogeological information from desk study information, Ground Investigation data, and National Vegetation Classification and Phase 1 habitat survey data presented in the Volume 3 Annex 3.3: Phase 1 Habitat, National Vegetation Classification and Hedgerow of the ES (REP2-014). The Applicants arranged a follow-on meeting with Natural England to share and discuss the concerns in relation to the Lytham St. Annes Dunes. This took place on 12th June 2025. The Applicants have incorporated Natural England's comments into the production of the Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment (S_D3_6). The Applicants have made a commitment (CoT128 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments Register of the ES (REP2-010)) to undertake hydrogeological	No change.		The Applicants have undertaken an updated NVC survey of the Lytham St Anne's Dunes SSSI/ LNR to provide a more up-to-date baseline showing the groundwater dependent ecosystems (the survey was completed week commencing 21st July). However as discussed in previous responses on this matter, it is not considered that the habitats will have changed significantly since the 2016 NVC survey reported in the chapter (noting that the 2016 survey was already ground-truthed with an updated walkover survey in August 2024). The approach to avoidance and mitigation of the SSSI habitats will therefore not change, although the data will be used to inform the hydrogeological risk assessment (CoT41, CoT119). The NVC survey report will be submitted into the examination at Deadline 5. The Applicants are planning to undertake the remaining NVC survey of the St. Annes Old Links Golf Course BHS in September 2025 subject to landowner permission and will include this in the NVC survey report submitted at Deadline 5.

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			risk assessment(s) in relation to the crossing of the Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI. These assessment(s) will be used to inform the detailed site-specific crossing design(s) for the installation of the offshore export cables beneath Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI. This is secured by Requirement 12 of Schedules 2A and 2B of the draft DCO (REP2-004).			
NE14	Additional information required on Direct Pipe Trenchless Technique to be able to fully assess the potential impacts to Lytham St. Annes Dunes SSSI. Insufficient detail on Direct Pipe, to fully assess the potential impacts on the SSSI. No inclusion of an outline contingency plan and no assessment of the Worst Case Scenario (WCS) i.e. no other option assessed if Direct Pipe is not an option. Provide further detail on the Direct Pipe methodology to be able to fully assess the potential impacts to the SSSI. Assess the WCS including a contingency should Direct Pipe not be possible. It is possible this issue could be progressed with further provision of information."		The Applicants have responded to Natural England's comments regarding dewatering in Row ID NE 13 above. The Applicants have provided a detailed response regarding St Annes Old Links Golf Course BHS previously within RR-1601 1601.53 (PDA-014).	No change.		The Applicants are engaging with Natural England regarding their concerns about potential impacts on the sand dune features of the Lytham St Anne's Dunes SSSI. The Applicants submitted an Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment (REP3-061) at Deadline 3. The Applicants anticipate comments from Natural England at Deadline 4. A meeting was held on 12 June 2025 to discuss the proposed scope and structure of the Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment. Feedback from the call was used to amend the Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment content where appropriate.
NE15	Lack of sand dune habitat survey effort. From the information provided, Natural England advise that there is insufficient evidence for us to be able to advise on the scale and significance of impacts to dune slacks at St. Annes Old Links Golf Course BHS. The Applicant needs to undertake detailed dune slack surveys across the Study Area to inform the EIA. These surveys need to be undertaken during summer 2025. It is possible this issue could be progressed with further imminent survey effort and provision of information.		The Applicants have provided a detailed response regarding St Annes Old Links Golf Course BHS previously within RR-1601 1601.53 (PDA-014). The Applicants will be undertaking an updated NVC survey in July 2025 (subject to landowner permission). The survey report will be submitted into the examination.	No change.		The Applicants are planning to undertake the remaining NVC survey of the St. Annes Old Links Golf Course BHS in September 2025 subject to landowner permission and include this in the NVC survey report submitted at Deadline 5. .

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NE16	Lack of Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey effort. From information provided, Natural England advise that there is insufficient evidence for us to be able to advise on the scale and significance of impacts to soils. The Applicant needs to undertake a detailed ALC and soil survey of the agricultural land across the full Study Area to inform the EIA. These surveys need to be undertaken during summer 2025. Natural England advises that the commitment to restore land needs to be secured in the DCO. It is possible this issue could be progressed with further imminent survey effort and provision of information.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.6 (PDA-021) and within the Applicants' response to Hearing Action Points due at Deadline 1 (REP1-037). The Applicants maintain their position that further survey is not required. The Applicants note that Natural England have stated within their Deadline 2 Cover Letter (REP1-091) that they are reviewing this document and will be providing an update to the Risk and Issue Log at Deadline 3.	No change.		The Applicants have presented their position in response to these points within their response to Hearing Action Points 'Agricultural land classification surveys' (REP1-043). The Applicants consider that the survey coverage is appropriate and have provided examples of other DCOs which have followed the same approach with regards to survey coverage. The Applicants' assessment is in accordance with best practice and follows a precautionary approach with regards to the total area of BMV that would be affected. The same approach was used in the Mona Offshore Wind Project that was recently granted its DCO. The Applicants have committed to undertaking further soil surveys post consent. These surveys will include areas not previously surveyed within the Onshore Order Limits (for example, along the onshore export cable corridor) required for temporary and permanent use as part of the Transmission Assets. These surveys would provide soil information (as set out in the Outline Soil Management Plan (APP-200)) with the purpose of informing the detailed Soil Management Plans. The detailed Soil Management Plans will be specific to the location of any stage of works within the Onshore Order Limits and the measures will reflect the specific characteristics of the soils and the infrastructure elements proposed in that location (temporary or permanent land requirements). Results from the soil surveys will be shared with Natural England. The Applicants note that the Outline Soil Management Plans have been drafted in accordance with best practice and include the recognised soil handling and restoration guidance. The detailed Soil Management Plans will be based on the Outline Soil Management Plans and will be agreed with the relevant planning authority in consultation with Natural England, prior to the commencement of construction. The Applicants have committed to implement the detailed Soil Management Plan as agreed with the relevant planning authority. The Soil Management Plan forms part of the Code of Construction Practice and is secured in the draft DCO. With the commitments in place to undertake the further soil surveys at detailed design stage, the Applicants are unclear why Natural England require the surveys to be undertaken at this stage. The Applicants would welcome the opportunity to work through the points raised by Natural England. This would be best achieved on a call with the soils specialist to explain the Applicants' approach and to work towards a solution.
NE17	Developing on areas of restorable peat. There is insufficient information to ascertain whether the proposal will have direct or indirect impacts on deep peat. Provide further		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.7 (PDA-021).	No change.		The Applicants have produced a note at Deadline 4 (S_D4_15) to provide additional information on the consideration of the potential impacts of the Transmission Assets on peat resources, including desk top studies and site surveys. This note concludes that the nature and extent of peat resources and their land use function within the Transmission Assets Order Limits is

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	evidence to show if restorable peat is present. This should include peat data for the route of the cables and include soil cores in the areas mapped as deep peat England Peat Status Greenhouse Gas and Carbon Storage. It is possible this issue could be progressed with further provision of information.					understood and the measures proposed through the implementation of the Outline Code of Construction Practice (REP3-009), including the Outline Soil Management Plan (APP-200), are appropriate to ensure that the agricultural peat resources can be appropriately managed and the land restored to its productive agricultural land use following construction of the Transmission Assets. The Applicants would still welcome the opportunity to meet with Natural England's specialist to engage further on this point.
NE18	***Onshore and Intertidal Ornithology*** Impacts to Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site intertidal waterbirds due to the landfall works. Natural England advise that the proposed level of restriction to the landfall works is insufficient to avoid an adverse effect on the Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site. The Applicant should develop comprehensive seasonal restrictions for the key intertidal species and months of the year. These should be underpinned by updated HRA conclusions based on data from site specific surveys, and a more thorough assessment of the potential habitat loss/disturbance effects and their implications for SPA/Ramsar site species. Potential resolution This is subject to the Applicant bringing forward an appropriate level of seasonal restriction to address the potential impacts to the species.		The Applicants have responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.56 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014). The Applicants would also draw attention to the update to CoT129 (Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments Register (REP2-010)) which strengthens the working restrictions within the intertidal area to a full restriction between Nov – Mar. This will remove all impacts for intertidal birds over the sensitive winter period (Nov – Mar). The Applicants also provided additional information on impacts to the passage features via a technical note (REP2-045).	Progressed but not resolved. The Applicant has now committed to a restriction on all construction activity from November to March (inclusive) at landfall. This addresses Natural England's concerns regarding the over-wintering features of the SPA and Ramsar site, however our concerns regarding the passage features of the SPA and Ramsar site remain outstanding.		The Applicants remain fully committed to addressing these matters and to working collaboratively with Natural England to reach a resolution. In support of this commitment, the Applicants met with Natural England on 25 July 2025 and are working closely with Natural England to address this issue and are currently in discussions about measures to reduce impacts at source.
NE19	Lack of an in-principle derogations case for impacts to intertidal SPA/Ramsar site waterbirds. Unless effective seasonal restrictions for the wintering and passage periods can be committed to, we advise that an in-principle derogations case will need to be developed. This would need to demonstrate no alternative solutions to delivering the public interest objectives of the project and Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI). A robust in-principle derogations case should be submitted into the Examination, including a demonstration that a greater degree of		The Applicants have responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.57 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014) with further information in NE18 above. The Applicants and Natural England can confirm that the parties met on 28 April 2025 to discuss potential ornithological impacts associated with the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site and Liverpool Bay SPA. Following on from the meeting, the Applicants	"Progressed but not resolved. The Applicant has now committed to a restriction on all construction activity from November to March (inclusive) at landfall. This addresses Natural England's concerns regarding over-wintering SPA and Ramsar site birds, but without further mitigation, AEoI cannot be ruled out for the passage features of the SPA. We still have concerns regarding the effectiveness of the proposed initiative at Fairhaven saltmarsh and continue to consider that it constitutes compensation, not mitigation."		The Applicants remain fully committed to addressing these matters and to working collaboratively with Natural England to reach a resolution. In support of this commitment, the Applicants met with Natural England on 25 July 2025 and are working closely with Natural England to address this issue and are currently in discussions about measures to reduce impacts at source. In light of the measures to minimise the impacts at source (e.g., seasonal restriction (CoT110), ECoW, and screening of construction works (section 1.6 of the Outline Ecological Management Plan), the Applicants do not believe that the works at the landfall would result in AEOI and have set out their position regarding this in a note to be submitted at Deadline 4 (AEoI - ISH2.12). As a result, the Applicants share Natural England's view (Q6.1.2, in REP3-095, Responses to the Examining Authority's written questions) that if disturbance effects at the landfall during the passage season can be

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Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets - Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS)						
	seasonal restriction is not achievable, and a far more detailed submission regarding the installation and management of the compensatory measures. Potential resolution. This is subject to the Applicant providing an in-principle derogations case demonstrating that there are no alternative solutions to delivering the project's objectives, including a greater degree of seasonal restriction, and a detailed proposal for compensatory measures."		prepared further information to aid Natural England agreeing that there are no Adverse Effects on Integrity of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site and Liverpool Bay SPA. The Applicants have made the commitment CoT129 (Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments Register (REP2-010)) which strengthens the working restrictions within the intertidal area to a full restriction between Nov – Mar. This will remove all impacts for intertidal birds over the sensitive winter period (Nov – Mar). The Applicants also provided additional information on impacts to the passage features via a technical note (REP2-045). Therefore the Applicants consider that an in-principal derogation case is not required for Liverpool Bay SPA or the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar Site.			reduced to acceptable levels through mitigation, the Fairhaven Saltmarsh shuld be considered as an enhancement measure.
NE20	"Impacts to Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar terrestrial waterbirds. Natural England advise that there is not currently enough information within the Application to rule out impacts for wintering, passage and terrestrial features of Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site. We require further clarity from the Applicant on the following aspects: HRA conclusions should be based on data from site specific surveys, habitat loss and its implications for SPA/Ramsar site species should be further quantified, proposed mitigation areas need further justification on their appropriateness. Potential resolution. This is subject to the Applicant providing further information to support their HRA conclusions, consideration of spatial scheduling to reduce the level of impact, and		The Applicants have responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.58 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014). The Applicants are currently engaging with Natural England and are committed to providing enough detail to satisfy Natural England that there will be no adverse effects on site integrity for the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar terrestrial waterbirds. Information submitted at Deadline 2 included: • The Applicants have provided Natural England with noise	Progressed but not resolved. The Applicant has provided further information on the proposed mitigation areas in [REP2-045] and [REP2-018]. However, a high level review indicates the information still lacks sufficient detail in regards to mitigating impacts to SPA/Ramsar site waterbirds.		The Applicants have provided further detail on this in the Terrestrial Waterbirds technical note (S_D4_17) submitted at Deadline 4 as well as updates to the Outline Ecological Management Plan. The Applicants note that this information was well received during the meeting with Natural England on 25 July 2025 and await a response from NE but hope that this addresses Natural England's concerns regarding impacts on terrestrial waterbirds. .

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	NE Rel Rep RAG rating and D1	Applicants' comment at Deadline 3	Update on Progression at Deadline 3	RAG D3	Applicants' comment at Deadline 4
Taken from NE's Relevant and Written Representations						
Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets - Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS)						
	greater detail on the proposed mitigation habitats."		modelling information and information regarding the proposed construction accesses to the north of Newton Marsh SSSI. The Applicants submitted a technical note on Newton Marsh SSSI and River Ribble Crossing (REP2-044) at Deadline 2. • Updated Outline Ecological Management Plan (REP2-018) which contains further details on the Lytham Moss and Newton with Scales mitigation areas.			
NE21	Mitigation of impacts to Newton Marsh SSSI. Impacts to Newton Marsh SSSI have not been sufficiently assessed. There is minimal information on what works will take place in close proximity to this site and how the work will be managed to not affect the site. Natural England advise that further consideration of Newton Marsh SSSI is included and updated within the assessment. Further justification should be provided on how the Applicant has concluded no risk to the site and what mitigation measures might be implemented. It is possible this issue could be progressed with further provision of information.		The Applicants have responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.59 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014). The Applicants have provided Natural England with noise modelling information and information regarding the proposed construction accesses to the north of Newton Marsh SSSI. The Applicants submitted a technical note on Newton Marsh SSSI and River Ribble Crossing (REP2-044) at Deadline 2.	"Resolution in progress. The Applicant has provided further information in [REP2-044] regarding Newton Marsh SSSI and the River Ribble crossing which has satisfied our concerns. Given Newton Marsh SSSI is well used by SPA waterbirds, it is necessary to update the ISAA in due course to set out why Newton Marsh SSSI will not be impacted by the construction phase. This would then fully resolve our concern. "		The Applicants welcome Natural England's conclusion that there will be no adverse effects on Newton Marsh SSSI. The Applicants have committed to update information in HRA Stage 2 Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment Part Three (APP-017) (for onshore and offshore ornithology) at Deadline 5.
NE22	***Fylde MCZ*** MCZ assessment and Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB). Natural England do not agree with the Applicants conclusion of no likelihood of hindering the conservation objectives of Fylde MCZ, which has been designated for subtidal sand and subtidal mud. It is our opinion that the impact on Fylde MCZ will be long term and will alter the extent of the physical		The Applicants have responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.45 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014). The Applicants' provided a Stage 2 MCZ Assessment, including a without prejudice, in-principle Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) Plan, at Deadline 1 (REP1-059).	"Resolved. The Applicant has undertaken a Stage 2 MCZ Assessment and without prejudice MEEB and submitted these into Examination at Deadline 1. Therefore this issue has been resolved at Deadline 2. Please note, other comments relating to the MCZ assessment are not resolved. This comment has specifically been resolved as the Applicant has provided the documents requested.		The Applicants welcome the resolution of this issue at Deadline 3.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	NE Rel Rep RAG rating and D1	Applicants' comment at Deadline 3	Update on Progression at Deadline 3	RAG D3	Applicants' comment at Deadline 4
Taken from NE's Relevant and Written Representations						
Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets - Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS)						
	attributes and distribution of biological communities supported by these features. Natural England advise that every effort should be made to reduce the impacts through the adoption of robust mitigation measures, including commitments to remove infrastructure at the decommissioning phase. Natural England advise that the MCZ assessment should proceed to a stage 2 assessment and provide a without prejudice MEEB case. Unless the Applicant's position changes, it is unlikely that there will be agreement between the Applicant and Natural England during examination on this issue.		Please also see the Applicants response to row NE04. The Applicants and Natural England will be meeting on the 22 July 2025 to review the PADSS and Risks and Issues log with respect to offshore matters, which will allow the parties to provide updated positions at any issue specific hearings in week commencing 28 July and at Deadline 4.	NE has provided further comments on the Applicants 'Without prejudice MEEB proposal in 'Tab J Benthic Compensation' of this R&I Log and Appendix J of our Deadline 2 submission. "		

7.3 Risk and Issues Log – DCO and dMLs

Table 7-3: Responses to questions regarding the DCO and dMLs.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants' comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
RI_A1	The definition of commence and offshore preparations works within the DCO and all three DMLs must be amended by the Applicant to exclude all works except pre-construction surveys to inform the construction plans and mitigation.		The Applicants welcome the decision to resolve this issue at Deadline 2.			
RI_A2	Due to the increasing complexity of construction of large offshore works, we advise that six months is considered an appropriate period prior to construction, not four months as stated in Schedule 14 and 15 Part 2 Condition 19(10, [APP-005].		The Applicants welcome the decision to resolve this issue at Deadline 2.			
RI_A3	The definition of 'maintain' within the DCO and schedules 14-17 of the deemed Marine Licences (dML) restricts work that is materially different or has materially different impacts. The Applicant should amend the wording to ensure maintenance works do not lead to impacts in excess of those assessed within the ES.		The Applicants welcome the decision to resolve this issue at Deadline 2.			
RI_A4	The Applicant should remove the definition of Natural England in Article 2 (1) [APP-005] and replace with a definition of Statutory Nature Conservation Body (SNCB), all references to Natural England throughout the DCO and DML (and Schedules) should be amended to state the relevant SNCB.		The Applicants have removed the definition of Natural England and instead now use the definition of Statutory Nature Conservation Body throughout the draft DCO (C1/F05).	No change.		The Applicants confirm that this amendment was incorporated to the draft DCO (REP3-009) at deadline 3.
RI_A5	The Applicant should amend [APP-005] Schedule 2A Table 3 of the DCO to include maximum number and size of UXOs to remove using high order detonations. This should also be updated in Schedule 2B table 4 and in Schedules 14 and 15. If the information required to undertake a full assessment is not yet available, UXO clearance should not be included as a licensed activity in the DCO - a standalone Marine Licence should be sought post-consent from the MMO.		The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's 'without-prejudice' reference for restricting UXO clearance to low order methods only, as set out in the draft DCO (REP2-004). The Applicants understand that Natural England welcome the inclusion of a maximum number of UXOs to be cleared by low order methods in the draft DCO (REP2-004). The maximum number of UXOs likely to require clearance was established via a site-specific desktop study, which was commissioned for the Transmission Assets. This desktop study was undertaken to estimate potential UXO to be cleared (as set out under paragraph 3.12.3.3 of Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description (REP2-008)), and considered multiple aspects such as past UXO quantities seen on similar projects, geophysical data available for the project, the historic use of project area and location of landfalls, ports/harbours, and carried out a risk assessment for the project. The Applicants consider therefore this represents a robust site-specific baseline to identify potential UXOs, prior to more detailed site	No change.		The Applicants refer to their response at REP3-056 to the Examining Authority's Written Question 2.5.1 where the Applicants state that it is unlikely full agreement will be reached on this matter and notes that the made Order for the Mona Offshore Wind Project retains the 'low order unexploded ordnance clearance' condition (Condition 21(1) in Schedule 14 of the made Order).

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants' comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
			investigation surveys being undertaken post consent. The Applicants consider that it is appropriate and justified to include low order UXO clearance activities within the offshore DMLs at Schedules 14 and 15 of the draft DCO (REP2-004). This has been assessed through the EIA and relevant controls are secured through Condition 20 (low order unexploded ordnance clearance) of Schedules 14 and 15 of the draft DCO (REP2-004). Detailed Marine Mammal Mitigation Protocols (MMMPs) will be developed and implemented in accordance with the Outline MMMP to reduce the risk of injury to marine mammals and provide for the use of low order UXO clearance only. These MMMPS must be approved by the MMO in consultation with Natural England as the "relevant statutory nature conservation body" and the MCA, meaning that Natural England will have appropriate oversight of any licensed UXO clearance activities. All low order UXO clearance activities must be undertaken in accordance with the approved documents. This is secured by CoT64 of the Commitments Register (REP2-010). The MMMPs will require implementation of a mitigation hierarchy for UXO clearance, prioritising avoidance of UXOs and the use of low order techniques. However, avoidance may not always be possible, depending on the circumstances surrounding each UXO, in which case the Applicants consider it necessary for low order UXO to be authorised under each of the offshore DMLs at Schedules 14 and 15 of the draft DCO (REP2-004). If high order UXO clearance is required, a separate marine licence will be applied for and will include consideration of secondary mitigation measures such as Noise Abatement Systems (NAS) (CoT 64 of the Commitments Register (REP2-010)).			
RI_A6	The Applicant has committed to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), but has not included it as a DCO requirement. The Applicant should include a requirement that secures the delivery and maintenance of BNG as a matter of good practice.		The Applicants refer Natural England to their position as stated in their Response to Natural England's Relevant Representation (RR-1601.A.7) and their Response to Natural England's Risk and Issues Log (REP2-034) at Deadline 2. These responses make clear that there is currently no legal requirement to provide for biodiversity net gain (BNG) in applications for development consent under the Planning Act 2008 and that the Transmission Assets are exempt from any future legal requirement as the requirement will not apply retrospectively to applications made before the provisions come into force. On that basis, the biodiversity benefit areas have been put forward on	Natural England highlight that our initial comment was raised due to the Applicant's proposals for biodiversity benefit areas. However, we note the development is not subject to a mandatory net gain requirement. Therefore we reiterate our comment in RI_G35 and response to the ExA Q's 6.2.1 and 6.2.2. We therefore consider this matter closed at D3.		The Applicants thank Natural England for their confirmation that this matter is considered closed.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants' comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
			a voluntary basis and the Applicants are committed to delivering those measures where they are able to acquire the land and rights to do so. The biodiversity benefit areas are also not required to mitigate any environmental impacts identified through the EIA. The Applicants therefore do not consider it appropriate to include a BNG Requirement in the draft DCO (REP2-004) but will endeavour to deliver BNG measures where possible.			
RI_A7	Micro-siting around features of conservation importance, such as reef of Annex I quality, is a standard mitigation. We request that the requirement to consider micro-siting around features of conservation importance be secured within the DMLs, as it is currently with respect to archaeological interest features.		The Applicants note this comment. The purpose of including reference to 'environmental micro-siting' under Condition 18(1)(a)(iii) in Schedule 14 and 15 of the draft DCO (REP2-004) is to provide a 'catch-all' for environmental receptors, which would include features of conservation importance, such as reef of Annex I quality. On the basis that the licensed activities (or any stage thereof) under each of the offshore DMLs may not commence until a design plan which includes 'any archaeological exclusion zones or environmental micro-siting requirements' is approved in writing by the MMO in consultation with Trinity House and the MCA (see (Condition 18(1)(a)(iii) of Schedules 14 and 15 of the draft DCO (REP2-004)), and that the licensed activities must be carried out in accordance with the approved plans under Condition 18 (see Condition 19(3) of the offshore DMLs at Schedules 14 and 15 of the draft DCO (REP2-004), the Applicants consider that there is indeed a condition to ensure appropriate consideration is given to micro-siting around features of conservation importance, such as reef of Annex I quality, within the offshore DMLs. The Applicants have however provided some additional drafting to provide further clarity and alignment to the Morgan Generation and Morecambe Generation DMLs in this regard.	No change.		The Applicants confirm that this amendment was incorporated to the draft DCO (REP3-009) at deadline 3. The Applicants also refer to their response at NE6 above.
RI_A8	a) Natural England requests that a condition to secure an updated Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan (OOMP) be included, we note this is a standard condition of most OWFs. b) Additionally, it should be stipulated within the OOMP that cable protection may only be deployed under this consent for a period of ten years post-construction outside of Fylde MCZ, and no deployment of cable protection during O&M within Fylde MCZ. Any additional cable protection within Fylde MCZ will require a new Marine Licence.		The Applicants position remains as set out at Deadline 2 (REP2-034). However, the Applicants will discuss this matter with Natural England at a meeting confirmed for the 22 July 2025 to allow the parties to provide updates at Deadline 4.	No change		In response to Natural England's comments, the Applicants included a new commitment in the Outline Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan, which has been updated and submitted at Deadline 4 (J19 / F02). Briefly, the DCO would allow for further cable/scour protection works, cable reburial, repair or replacement to the maximum design scenario (MDS) set out in the Project Description (REP2-008) and Outline OOMP (J19/F02), after which a new marine licence would be required. Furthermore, with specific reference to cable/scour protection, the Applicants have made a commitment in the updated Outline OOMP (J19/F02) to limit the development of cable/scour protection in the O&M phase to the first ten years / limit of the MDS

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants' comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
						(whichever is first) outside the Fylde MCZ and the first two years inside the MCZ (See also the Applicants response to RI_C2. Finally, the Applicants have also made a commitment at Deadline 4 to no cable/scour protection shall be permanently deployed in the intertidal area between MLWS and MHWS (see CoT133; F1.5.3/F05).
RI_A9	Schedule 14 and 15 Part 2 Condition 20 relates to the detonation of UXOs, however there is no mention within this condition of securing the use of Noise Abatement Systems (NAS). Amend the condition to include the need to consider the use of NAS.		The Applicants welcome the decision to resolve this issue at Deadline 2.			
RI_A10	Schedule 14 and 15 Part 2 Conditions 24, 25 and 26 do not include any of the detailed ecological monitoring required, except for monitoring during construction piling. We would expect benthic surveys to be conducted to identify any features of conservation importance. We would also expect post-construction monitoring to be secured for any features of conservation importance identified in the pre-construction surveys that are predicted to be impacted by construction, in order to monitor their recovery. The Applicant should update the monitoring conditions to secure these.		The Applicants refer Natural England to this point in their Response to Natural England's Risk and Issues Log (REP2-034) at Deadline 2 . The Applicants' position remains that all appropriate monitoring has been secured through Condition 18(1)(d) of the DMLs at Schedules 14 and 15 of the draft DCO (REP2-004), which requires submission and approval of a monitoring plan (which accords with the outline in-principle monitoring plan (OIPMP) (APP-225)). The OIPMP includes commitments requiring monitoring of the recovery of sediments and benthic communities within the Fylde MCZ (APP-225) as best practice measures. Given the ES has not identified any effects which are significant in terms of EIA regulations on benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology receptors, no further measures are considered necessary or appropriate. However, the Applicants will discuss this matter with Natural England at a meeting confirmed for the 22 July 2025 to allow the parties to provide updates at Deadline 4.	"No change. Natural England notes the Applicant's response ([PDA-015], 1601.A.12). Whilst we acknowledge the conditions require submission of relevant monitoring plans in accordance with the OIPMP, we highlight that there are several outstanding comments raised in our RR's which relate to further updates and ecological surveys to be included in the OIPMP. Therefore our concerns relate to the lack of proposed monitoring within the OIPMP rather than how this has been secured within the DCO. Additionally, we note the response provided by the Applicant and have removed reference to piling from our original comment."		The Applicants refer to their previous response to this point at REP3-055 and to their response at REP3-056 to the Examining Authority's Written Question 2.5.1 where the Applicants state that it is unlikely full agreement will be reached on this matter. However, the Applicants have committed to pre and post construction monitoring of benthic communities within the Fylde MCZ to monitor for temporal and spatial recovery, which is secured through the updated Offshore In Principle Monitoring Plan submitted at Deadline 4 (J20 / F03).
RI_A11	The recent SoS decision for Sheringham and Dudgeon Extensions Project (SADEP) approved Condition 20 in Schedules 10 and 11 of SADEP DCO based on a recommendation from Natural England and the MMO for particular impacts requiring remediation or further mitigation works. Natural England advises that a similar condition should be included within all offshore wind dMLs.		The Applicants refer to their Response to Natural England's Risk and Issues Log (REP2-034) at Deadline 2. The Applicants' position remains that it does not consider it necessary or reasonable for blanket adaptive management provisions to be included in the offshore DMLs at Schedules 14 and 15 of the draft DCO (REP2-004). The EIA for this Application has not identified any likely significant environmental effects that would require ecological post-construction monitoring or the need for potential adaptive management. However, the Applicants will discuss this matter with Natural England on the 22 July 2025 to allow the parties to provide updates at Deadline 4.	No change.		The Applicants refer to their previous response to this point at REP3-055 and to their response at REP3-056 to the Examining Authority's Written Question 2.5.1 where the Applicants state that it is unlikely full agreement will be reached on this matter.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants' comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
RI_A12	Offshore emergency works have not been clearly defined by the Applicant within the outline OOMP or the DCO. We advise that the Applicant should define 'offshore emergency works' in the DCO/dML and this definition should be updated within the outline OOMP. The MMO's guidance on emergency works offshore should be followed and referred to within the Application.		The Applicants position remains as set out at Deadline 2 (REP2-034). The Applicants will discuss this matter with Natural England on the 22 July 2025 to allow the parties to provide updates at Deadline 4	No change.		The Applicants have updated the Outline OOMP at Deadline 4 (J19 / F02) to clarify that reference to offshore emergency works refers to cable repair or the reburial of cables that have become exposed and which could present a risk to navigation, both of which are included in Table 1.1 of the updated Outline OOMP. r
R1_A13			The Applicants have updated paragraph 5(1) of Schedule 12 to the draft DCO (REP2-004), to refer to '21 days' instead of '10 days'. This is included in the draft DCO (C1/05) submitted at Deadline 3.	No change.		The Applicants confirm that this amendment was incorporated to the draft DCO (REP3-009) at Deadline 3 which should resolve this matter.

7.4 Risk and Issues Log – Physical Processes

Table 7-4: Responses to questions regarding Physical Processes

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
Risk and Issues Log Deadline 1 – Physical Processes Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets Appendix B - Physical Processes						
RI_B1	a) There is uncertainty regarding the likely success of the Direct Pipe Trenchless Technique. Further details on the Direct Pipe Trenchless Technique, associated infrastructure, and the sediment geology, is required to be able to fully assess the potential impacts on coastal processes at the landfall. b) An outline contingency plan should be developed, and the worst-case should assessed and included within the relevant Application documents i.e. cable installation failure when using the Direct Pipe Trenchless Technique.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within the response RR-1601.B 1601.B.8 (PDA-016).	No change.		The Applicants have undertaken engineering analysis to determine suitability of this technique. The Applicants have provided appropriate examples of where this has been successfully employed within the response RR-1601.B 1601.B.8 (PDA-016). In the unlikely event of failure, a variation with associated assessment will be required under the terms of the DCO. Additionally, the Applicants have made a commitment (CoT114) to ensure that all permanent infrastructure (i.e. the offshore export cables) located between mean low water springs (MLWS) and mean high water springs (MHWS) will be buried to a target depth of 3 m. As such, no external protection would be required at the surface in the intertidal. In confirmation of this, the Applicants have included a new commitment that no cable/scour protection shall be permanently deployed in the intertidal area between MLWS and MHWS in the Commitments Register submitted at Deadline 4 (CoT133, F1.5.3/F05). Therefore there will be no impacts on coastal processes at landfall.
RI_B2	There is currently no commitment to the removal of cable/scour protection at end of project life (decommissioning). Natural England advises that a commitment to remove all on and above seabed infrastructure associated with the development within benthic designated sites (excluding cable crossings) at the time of decommissioning should be secured in the DCO, to prevent permanent impacts to marine physical processes. Without a commitment in the DCO, the worst-case		The Applicants provided detailed responses to the points raised by Natural England, with regards to cable protection, in RR-101 1601.42 and RR-1601 1601.43 (PDA-014) and RR-1601.C 1601.C.28 (PDA-017) and RI_B2 within the Annex 3.3 to Applicants' Response to WRs: Response to Natural England's Risk and Issues Log – Rev F01 (REP2-034)). The Applicants would also draw attention to the updated outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan submitted at Deadline 2 (REP2-022), which removed 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within the Fylde MCZ.	Progressed but not resolved. The Applicant has removed the option of 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within Fylde MCZ in their updated Outline CSIP [REP2-023]. This is welcomed, but we continue to advise that a commitment with the action to remove all on and above seabed infrastructure (including cable/scour protection) within benthic designated sites is secured in the DCO.		The Applicants note Natural England's approval of the removal of 'rock dump' as a cable protection option in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022) and Project Description (REP2-008). With regard to Natural England's final point, the Applicants have updated the draft DCO submitted at Deadline 4 (C1/F06) to include no rock dump in Condition 18(e) of Schedule 14 and 15 to align with the commitment already made in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022). Regarding the requested commitment to decommissioning all infrastructure and cable protection (with the exception of cable crossings) within the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants responded previously to this point within RR-1601.42 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014). As detailed in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022), the Transmission Assets design is considering multiple cable protection options. The Outline CSIP (REP2-022) identifies that cable burial is the preferred option for cable protection where practicable (CoT54) and should cable protection be required within the Fylde MCZ, it will be designed to be removable (CoT108) with the requirement for removal agreed with stakeholders and regulators at the time of decommissioning (CoT109).

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	scenario should assess the impacts of leaving assets permanently in situ. It is also noted that leaving cable protection on the seabed even outside of designated sites is not aligned with OSPAR					The use of cable/scour protection, where required, will be evaluated and further considered post-consent in Detailed CSIPs, focusing on both engineering suitability and environmental recoverability. The CSIPs are part of the Offshore Construction Method Statements that are secured in the Draft DCO (AS-004) in: Condition 18(1)(e)(i) of Schedule 14 for the Morgan Offshore Wind Project: Transmission Assets; and Condition 18(1)(e)(i) of Schedule 15 for the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm: Transmission Assets. The Applicants will submit a draft decommissioning programme to the Secretary of State for approval as required by the Energy Act 2004 prior to the commencement of construction . This is standard practice for offshore wind farm projects, and the decommissioning programme will be updated throughout the assets' lifespan to incorporate changing best practice and new technologies. Offshore decommissioning is secured under Requirement 21 of Schedule 2A and Schedule 2B of the draft DCO (AS-004).
RI_B3	a) There is currently insufficient information on the anticipated location, extent and design of cable protection measures placed along the Export Cable Corridor (ECC). Further information should be provided on location, extent and design of cable protection measures for us to advise on the potential impacts of cable protection on sediment transport pathways, particularly within Fylde MCZ . b) Further consideration within the assessments should be given to changes to sediment transport processes and seabed morphology due to the placement of cable protection measures at these locations. This should be updated within the relevant Application documents. c) Further options to minimise/mitigate impacts from cable protection on		The Applicants responded previously to points raised by Natural England regarding cable protection location and design in RR-1601 1601.43 (PDA-014). Further responses regarding seabed mobility, nearshore sediment transport and mitigation were provided in RR-1601.B 1601.B.16, 1601.B.18 and 1601.B.17 (PDA-016) respectively.	No change. We note the Applicant's response in ([PDA-016], 1601.B.18). We highlight that this response misquotes one of the Applicant's commitments: "CoT47 states that no foreign material will be placed on the bed's surface in the inter-tidal region and low profile/tapered armouring would be employed in shallow water should this be required." This differs to the wording provided for CoT47 in the Applicant's Commitment Register [REP2-011] which relates to cable protection and sandwave clearance within Fylde MCZ.		The Outline CBRA (APP-219) details sub-seabed geology and ground conditions and Depth of Lowering (burial depth) for cable burial along the full length of the cable corridor. In particular, the first section presented is the Export Cable Landing Section (KP0 – KP13.25) which extends from the Transition Joint Bays (TJBs) onshore out to a distance of 13.25 km offshore at a depth 14.23m chart datum (CD) and incorporates Depth of Closure (DoC) which is circa 10m CD. The information from the Outline CBRA indicates from LAT to DoC geological conditions are suitable for trenching to required depth. Cable crossings are located further offshore beyond the of DoC. The Outline CSIP (REP2-022) confirms that due to the sediment type found in the nearshore area and Fylde MCZ (i.e. predominantly sand and mud), traditional burial techniques are suitable to achieve the target burial depths and as per commitment CoT54 (REP3-013) identifies that cable burial is the preferred option for cable protection where practicable. It is therefore not anticipated that external cable protection would be required in the nearshore and this is to be confirmed by pre-construction surveys. However, in the unlikely event that burial to the target depth is not achievable, commitment CoT45 (REP3-013) states that cable protection will be tailored to the specific location and installed to limit change in water depth to no more than 5% (referenced to Chart Datum). The 5% limitation is secured in the draft DCO (REP3-009) under Condition 18(e) of Schedules 14 and 15. Whilst the basis of this limitation, which has been standard in DCOs for many years, is to maintain sufficient under-keel clearance of vessels to minimise the risk of vessel fouling, its applicability to minimising the potential for effects on physical processes and other environmental receptors is valid. In practical terms the 5%

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	physical processes should be explored.					limitation means that in 10 m water depth, cable protection, if required, cannot exceed 0.5 m and in 5m water depth, this is reduced to 0.25 m. At water depths of less than 5 m, the potential for any cable protection is none. Additionally, the Outline CSIP (REP2-022) states that, should cable protection be required in shallow water, protection will be sufficiently low profile and /tapered to cause minimal changes to wave, tide and sediment transport. With regards to mitigation, commitment CoT114 (REP3-013) states that all permanent infrastructure located between Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) and Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) will be buried to a target depth of 3 metres, subject to further pre-construction surveys to be reported within Detailed CBRAs. Moreover, a further commitment has made at Deadline 4 (see CoT133, in the updated Commitments Register (F1.5.3/F05)) states that "*no cable/scour protection shall be permanently deployed in the intertidal area between MLWS and MHWS*". The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical Process (APP-042) for submission at Deadline 5 to include information from the CBRA which indicates from LAT to Depth of Closure (circa 10m CD) geological conditions suitable for trenching to required depth.
RI_B4	a) We note that limited mitigation in relation to physical processes or benthic receptors during sandwave and boulder clearance has been proposed and further consideration should be demonstrated. b) Natural England advises that impacts to priority habitats under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 are avoided and due consideration is demonstrated. We advise that relevant Application documents should be updated accordingly and this is secured within the DCO/DMLs.		The Applicants responded previously to points raised by Natural England regarding sandwave clearance and boulder clearance in RR-1601.B 1601.B.4 and 1601.B.15 (PDA-016) respectively. The Applicants have responded previously to points relating to NERC priority habitats in RR-1601 1601.44 (PDA-014).	No change.		To minimise its impact, the Applicants reiterate the reductions in project parameters between the PEIR and final application, including: Reduction in sandwave clearance across offshore export cable route; reduced from 60% at PEIR to: • 5% within MCZ and 10% outwith MCZ • 9% total across offshore export cable And a reduction in cable protection parameters reduced from PEIR (20% for Morgan OWL and 15% Morecambe OWL) to: • 3% within MCZ (as contingency with cable burial preferred method of cable protection) • 10% total across offshore export cable The Applicants highlight that these reductions have significantly reduced impacts to all benthic subtidal receptors, including priority habitats under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 as outlined in full the Applicants' response to NE6. The Applicants do not, therefore, consider that further mitigation to avoid these habitats is justified or required. Further, the Applicants do not consider that there is precedent in the offshore wind industry, or other offshore industries, for avoiding the sedimentary habitats recorded within the Transmission Assets and neither would it possible to do so given their widespread distribution within the benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology study area.

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						The Applicants also highlight that biogenic or geogenic reef features were not identified as present within the site-specific surveys (section 2.6.3, Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045)).he Outline CSIP (REP2-022) states that based on pre-application geotechnical surveys, boulders are present in a low density across the majority of the study area but distributed sporadically along the offshore export cable corridor. Therefore, the method of boulder clearance is likely to be subsea grab, especially within the Fylde MCZ. The required boulder clearance width is 20 m centred on each cable, and boulders would be relocated circa 10 m either side from the centreline of each cable. Due to this limited distance, boulders would, inevitably, be relocated to areas of similar habitat, and seabed characteristics would remain unchanged. Therefore, the Applicants consider that no further mitigation measures or commitments are required.
RI_B5	We advise that the Applicant adequately considers the potential for a four-year gap between the completion of the first project (i.e. Morgan) and the commencement of the second (i.e. Morecambe) for 'Construction Scenario 3b'. We advise the MDS is updated within the Project Description and relevant Chapters to account for this, taking into consideration the potential for the recovery of seabed species and habitats resulting in outdated baseline data. We also advise that the relevant impact assessments are updated and outcomes taken account of in named plans.		The Applicants previous response RR-1601.B 1601.B. 5 (PDA-016) reiterated that the MDS for physical processes is concurrent construction and recovery between phases is beneficial for coastal processes. The MDS has been defined as appropriate to each potential impact and for benthic construction scenarios, please see response RR-1601.C 1601.C.7 (PDA-017).	No change. Natural England's original concerns in our Rel Reps [RR-1601] remain. Whilst we welcome the Applicant's further consideration [AS-070] of the MDS for construction, for the reasons discussed in our Rel Reps, we are concerned that a 'sequential' rather than 'concurrent' construction scenario may be the WCS for impacts to seabed morphology, physical features and adjacent shorelines (e.g. intertidal and nearshore zones, coastal morphology, and Fylde MCZ).		The Applicants have submitted Rule 9 – ES assessment of Construction Scenarios (AS-070). This document details how a four year gap between projects within the sequential construction scenario has been assessed in the Environmental Statement. The MDS assessed within Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical processes (APP-042) has taken due regard of the potential range of construction scenarios including sequential construction with a gap of up to four years. The MDS for physical processes was determined to be concurrent construction as the recovery between phases which is associated with sequential construction is deemed to be beneficial for coastal processes. The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical Processes (APP-042) for submission at Deadline 5 to include information outlining the justification of the concurrent scenario as the MDS for physical processes rather than the sequential scenario.
RI_B6	It is not clear that the 9% and 10% total cable corridor values for sandwave clearance and cable protection respectively refer to the MDS requirements for each of the individual 6 cables (noting that each will have its own trench)		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within the response RR-1601.B 1601.B.6 (PDA-016).	Resolved. The Applicant has provided further clarification on individual cable vs. collective MDS for sandwave levelling in [PDA-016]. However, please see B10 below in relation to concerns with sandwave levelling. And for cable protection quantities please see B12, B15, B18 and C2, C5, C9 C16, C25		The Applicants note that RI_B6 was resolved at Deadline 3.

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	or collectively. Similarly, clarity on the MDS specifications within and outside the Fylde MCZ should be provided. We advise that the MDS for construction and cable protection footprints are reviewed and updated where necessary across all ES chapters and named plans. And specific areas and volumes included for cable protection within and outside Fylde MCZ on the DCO/dML					
RI_B7	Natural England requires a plan showing the location of the proposed exit pits and Transmission Joint Bays (TJB) within the Application documents to be able to fully advise on the potential impacts of cabling under Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI and St Annes Old Links Golf Course BHS.		The Applicants responded previously to this matter within the response RR-1601.B 1601.B.7 (PDA-016). In addition, Annex 5.3 to the Applicants response to Hearing Action Points: ISH1 13, 14, 16, 17 (REP1-040) sets out additional information regarding the works proposed at the Lytham St. Annes Beach to facilitate the landfall of the offshore export cables, including indicative locations of exit pits, under Section 3 of the document.	Resolved. The Applicant has provided a plan showing the location of proposed exit pits and TJBs at Deadline 1 [REP1-040].		The Applicants note that RI_B7 was resolved at Deadline 3.
RI_B8	Natural England notes that the MDS for Pre-Lay Grapnel Run (PLGR), Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) clearance and boulder clearance have not been fully assessed within the ES Chapters. It is stated in the documents that “this is to prevent double counting of the seabed footprint parameters”. However, there is no certainty that these activities will be undertaken at the same time or within the same footprint as the other site preparation activities especially the relocation of boulders. We advise the MDS figures for each		The Applicants responded previously to this matter within the response RR-1601.B 1601.B.9 (PDA-016).	No change.		The Applicants recognised that within tNatural England’s guidance, UXO and boulder clearance are cited with respect to seabed habitats and species. During the EIA scoping phase, these impacts were scoped out of physical processes due to their limited temporal and spatial extents, however they have been assessed in the context of benthic habitats in Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045). Natural England stated broad agreement with the approach to assessment for physical processes as presented at the EWG meeting on 30th March 2023 in response to the minutes of the meeting (APP-190) and did not request the assessment of UXO or boulder clearance with respect to physical processes within the PEIR consultation S42 responses (APP-187). For completeness further information regarding boulder clearance was provided in the Applicants response to RR-1601.B.15 (PDA-016), whilst information relating to UXO clearance is provided in the Applicants response to RR-1601.B.14 (PDA-016). Additionally, the Applicants have provided a further explanation of the relationship between disturbance footprints for sandwave clearance, boulder clearance, UXO clearance and pre-lay

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	of these activities should be presented in the Project Description and all other relevant chapters in line with Natural England's Best Practice Guidance Phase III.					grapnlel run and the timing of activities in the Applicants response to Natural England response to ExQ1 against question 7.1.4. and against RI_C13 below. The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical Process (APP-042) for submission at Deadline 5 to include information presented in these responses regarding UXO, pre-lay grapnel run and boulder clearance.
RI_B9	We note that the MDS for sandwave clearance and seabed preparation is 1,426,900m3. However, this has not been broken down any further into individual activities, location, nor has a sandwave clearance impact width and length been provided and assessed. Natural England advises that the Applicant provides all the parameters associated with sandwave clearance and seabed preparation and the tools to be used for sandwave levelling to ensure the MDS and WCS have been assessed. This information should be included and updated within the ES Chapter and/or relevant named plan.		The Applicants provided a detailed response with regards to sandwave clearance volumes in RR-1601 1601.B.6 (PDA-016), whilst further information on seabed levelling was provided in RR-1601 1601.C.31 (PDA-017). The Applicants confirm that the volume of material arising from sandwave clearance, as presented in Table 3.5 of Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description (AS-024) is correct with a volume of 1,426,800 m^3 and not 1,426,900 m^3 as indicated by Natural England in their comment (See Annex 3.3 to Applicants' Response to WRs: Response to Natural England's Risk and Issues Log – Rev F01 (REP2-034)).	No change. We note the Applicant's response to our Relevant Reps and acknowledge that sandwave impact width and length have been provided [PDA-016]. However, it is still not clear if all of the parameters have been provided to determine the total spoil volume. Additionally, this has not been broken down into individual sandwave clearance/seabed preparation activities. Once all of the parameters have been provided and included in the ES, this issue can be readily resolved.		The MDS for total spoil arising from construction activities (both sandwave clearance and cable installation) is broken down and presented in Table 1.14 of Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical processes (APP-042). Seabed preparation relating to sandwave clearance and trenching for cable installation have broken down and assessed. The MDS assumes up to 1,426,800 m^3 of spoil arising from sandwave clearance which is comprised of; • Morgan offshore export cable: sandwave clearance along 9% of 400 km of offshore export cable length with a width of 60 m. This equates to a total spoil volume of 1,080,000 m^3 associated with the cable corridor. • Morecambe offshore export cable: sandwave clearance along 9% of 84 km of offshore export cable length with a width of 48 m. This equates to a total spoil volume of 346,800 m^3. Furthermore, part of this total relates to volume sandwave clearance along 5% of the 64 km of Morgan offshore export cables within Fylde MCZ and 5% of the 24 km of Morecambe offshore export cable within Fylde MCZ. This equates to a spoil volume of 172,800 m^3 for the Morgan offshore export cables within the Fylde MCZ and a total spoil volume of 97,200 m^3 for the Morecambe offshore export cables within the Fylde MCZ. Sandwave clearance within the MCZ represents 3% of the total offshore export cable. Additionally, the MDS assumes up to 2,178,000 m^3 of spoil arising from trenching for cable installation. Which is comprised of; • Morgan Offshore Wind Project Offshore export cables: Installation via trenching of up to 400 km of cable with a trench width of up to 3 m and a depth of up to 3 m. Total spoil volume of 1,800,000 m^3. Of this, up to 64 km would be within the Fylde MCZ with a total spoil volume of 288,000 m^3. • Morecambe Offshore Windfarm: Installation of up to 84 km of cable with a trench width of up to 3 m and a depth of up to 3 m. Total spoil volume of 378,000 m^3. Of this, up to 24 km would be within the Fylde MCZ with a total spoil volume of 108,000 m^3 As outlined in Table 1.14 of Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical processes (APP-042), boulder clearance activities will result in

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						minimal increases in suspended sediment concentrations due to seabed disturbance and these volumes were therefore not included in seabed preparation volumes. Therefore, the Applicants can confirm that the MDS has been correctly presented, and the impacts have been fully assessed. The Applicants would also highlight that within the Fylde MCZ, the Control Flow Excavator will be the only method used for sandwave clearance. The Applicants will update the Outline cable specification and installation plan (REP2-022), Project Description (REP2-008) and the Dredging and disposal - site characterisation plan (APP-227) at Deadline 5 to remove reference to 'dredging' as a sandwave clearance method in the Fylde MCZ.
RI_B10	Natural England advises that further assessment of the feasibility of the following cable installation tools: ploughing, jetting, mechanical cutting in shallow waters is required to support the worst-case scenario assessment for nearshore cable installation.		The Applicants responded previously to this matter within the response RR-1601.B 1601.B.11 (PDA-016).	No change.		The Applicants have previously responded to this point in full in the Applicants' response to RR.1601.B.11 (PDA-016). The Outline Cable Burial Risk Assessment (OCBRA) (APP-219) confirms that the seabed geology and ground conditions within the Transmission Assets Order Limits is dominated by sandy and clay sediments. These sediments are characterised in the OCBRA as loose to dense sand and low to medium strength clay in shallow water depth (up to -14.23 m). Figure 5 of the Outline OCSIP (REP2-022) shows that ploughing, jetting and cutting are suitable techniques for loose to dense sand and low to medium strength clay (soft to firm). Additionally, Figure 6 (APP-220) confirms that these techniques are suitable for offshore, nearshore, and beach areas. A combination of burial methods are likely to be adopted, with the OCSIP covering all necessary techniques to allow the appropriate method to be selected based on the expected sediment density and strength, ensuring the minimum burial depth is achieved. The information presented within the OCBRA (APP-219) and OCSIP (REP2-022) show that ploughing, jetting and cutting are suitable installation techniques for the sandy and clay sediment types found in shallow waters within the Transmission Assets Order Limits and a worst case scenario has been presented. The Outline CBRA (APP-219) was prepared by Royal HaskoningDHV who have a wealth of experience in undertaking CBRA's and the Applicants export cable installation project managers have a combined experience of over 50 years installing subsea cables, including selection of the appropriate burial tools / techniques in shallow water and/ or constructing new machinery to improve the efficiency of cable burial. As set out in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022), based on the site investigation data collected to inform the environmental impact assessment and engineering design, which included borehole and cone penetration test data, the Applicants are confident of the ability to install the offshore export cables using the identified installation tools of ploughing, jetting and cutting. The Applicants would also note that these installation methods have

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						been used successfully on numerous offshore wind farm projects around the UK. As set out in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022) and included in the updated Commitments Register at Deadline 4 (F1.3.5/F05) the Applicants have committed to micro-siting of cable routes to areas with the greatest potential for burial success and lower likelihood or requiring cable protection and made significant reductions in cable protection provisions to reflect the confidence in successful cable burial. The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical Processes (APP-042) for submission at Deadline 5 to include all additional clarifications/justifications provided in submissions at previous deadlines to address Natural England's comments relating to the feasibility of cable installation in shallow waters.
RI_B11	a) Natural England advises that the worst case impacts from UXO clearance in relation to marine processes, including recovery is further assessed. b) Whilst the Applicant has stated UXO clearance activities may take place within Fylde MCZ; we advise that UXOs should be moved outside of the MCZ prior to detonation. The Applicant should demonstrate why they have not committed to this mitigation. This information should be included and updated within the ES Chapter and/or relevant named plans.		The Applicants responded with overarching comments regarding UXO clearance in RR-1601.B 1601.B.9 (PDA-016). Whilst a further detailed response was provided in RR-1601.B 1601.B.14 (PDA-016). Additionally, further information relevant to benthic habitats was provided in the response RR-1601.C 1601.C.22 (PDA-017). In addition, the Applicants' responses to NE10 and RI_B11 within the Annex 3.3 to Applicants' Response to WRs: Response to Natural England's Risk and Issues Log – Rev F01 (REP2-034) confirms the removal of high order UXO clearance from the draft DCO (REP1-008) at Deadline 1.	No change.		Please see the Applicant's response to RI_B8 above regarding the UXO clearance with respect to physical processes. With regards to the Fylde MCZ, the clearance of up to four UXOs within the Fylde MCZ was assessed in paragraph 1.8.2.22 of the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019). It is not advised on safely grounds to move UXO prior to detonation if avoidable. Given that high order UXO detonation was removed from the draft DCO at Deadline 1 only localised disturbance is anticipated, which is discussed in more detail against 091.1 in the Applicants response to REP3-092 – Appendix C3 to Natural England's Deadline 3 Submission (S_D4_2.6)
RI_B12	We advise that further information is provided by the Applicant on how seabed mobility has been considered with regards to cable protection requirements and locations in relation to this specific Application. This should be updated and included within the ES chapters (including those		The Applicants responded previously to this matter within the response RR-1601.B 1601.B.16 (PDA-016).	No change. To expand on our Rel Reps and resolve this comment, we advise that seabed mobility needs to be adequately assessed along the export cable routes. This should consider rates and directions of bedform migration and, if possible, estimated bed elevation changes. We also advise that the 2023 ABPmer report, should be provided to increase understanding of seabed level variability and future seabed levels.		The Outline CBRA (APP-219) details sub-seabed geology and ground conditions and Depth of Lowering for cable burial along the full length of the cable corridor. This includes seabed features such as sand wave height, wave length and mobile bedform height. The Outline CSIP (REP2-022) confirms that due to the sediment type found in the nearshore area and Fylde MCZ (i.e. predominantly sand and mud), traditional burial techniques are suitable to achieve the target burial depths and as per commitment CoT54 (REP3-013) identifies that cable burial is the preferred option for cable protection where practicable.

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	relating to landfall) and in the Outline CSIP.					The Applicants have provided a detailed response to this point in response to Natural England response to ExQ1 against question 7.1.6 (S_D4_2.6).
RI_B13	It is unclear what the potential impacts may be for intertidal Direct Pipe installation, trenching, and temporary infrastructure (e.g. cofferdams) on seabed and coastal morphology, and how recovery of the landfall location will be secured. Natural England advise that (a) the Applicant should consider and assess all potential impacts to seabed morphology that may arise due to trenchless landfall works during the lifetime of the Projects. Including size and duration of installation of cofferdams and potential disruption to coastal processes. And (b) produce an Outline Landfall Method Statement and secure this in the DCO/dMLs. Natural England also advises further information is needed about the location of the export cables across the beach.		The Applicants previously responded with regards to trenchless techniques at landfall in RR-1601 1601.52 (PDA-014), whilst further details on coastal processes were provided in RR-1601.B 1601.B.20 (PDA-016). Responses RR-1601.B 1601.B.19 (PDA-016) and RR-1601.C 1601.C.11 (PDA-017) provide information regarding excavated material to be used as backfill for cofferdams. The location of exits pits and cable installation were detailed in RR-1601.B 1601.B.7 and 1601.B.20 (PDA-016) respectively. Additionally, annex 5.3 to the Applicants response to Hearing Action Points: ISH1 13, 14, 16, 17 (REP1-040) sets out additional information regarding the works proposed at the Lytham St. Annes Beach to facilitate the landfall of the offshore export cables, including indicative locations of exit pits, under Section 3 of the document.	No change. We note the Applicant's response to our Relevant Reps [PDA-016]. The Applicant has provided evidence and examples from other windfarms in relation to Direct Pipe installation. The response states that the Construction Method Statement (CMS) will cover landfall activities. However, an outline CMS has not been submitted into examination, therefore our original comment still stands.		The Applicants have responded to this point in in response to Natural England's response to ExQ1 against question 7.1.4 (S_D4_2.6). The Applicants will prepare an outline landfall construction method statement to address Natural England's request. It has not been possible to prepare this in time for Deadline 4 and therefore the Applicants intend to submit this document into the examination in w/c 18 August 2025 (subject to the Examining Authority's acceptance)..
RI_B14	It is unclear in [APP-042] 1.10.4.1 what is meant my 'foreign material'. Natural England advises that the Applicant secures a commitment that no foreign material will be placed above the surface (winter beach levels), which could potentially interfere with sediment transport pathways. We advise that this is also		The Applicants responded previously to this matter within the response RR-1601.B 1601.B.20 (PDA-016).	No change. The Applicant has confirmed that their sentence 'no foreign material will be placed on the beach above the surface' relates to the O&M stage. Natural England continues to advise that this is secured as a commitment and in the DCO/dML's. We also highlight our response to RI_B3 above which is also applicable here.		Please see the Applicant's response to RI_B3, highlighting that commitment CoT114 (REP3-013) states that all permanent infrastructure located between Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) and Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) will be buried to a target depth of 3 metres, subject to further pre-construction surveys to be reported within Detailed CBRAs. Moreover,, a further commitment has made at Deadline 4 (F1.5.3/F05) which states that no permanent cable/scour protection shall be deployed in the intertidal between MLWS and MHWS.

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	secured in the DCO/DMLs.					
RI_B15	Whilst we recognise that several cable protection types have been presented, no commitment to using a specific cable protection has been made. Natural England advises the selection of cable protection should favour those engineering options which reduce potential impacts to marine processes and have the greatest likelihood of successful removal at decommissioning.		The Applicants provided detailed responses to the points raised by Natural England, with regards to cable protection, in RR-1601 1601.42 and 1601.43 (PDA-014), and RR-1601.C 1601.C.28 (PDA-017). Please also see response to RI_B2 above. The Applicants would also highlight the updates made to the Outline CSIP submitted at Deadline 2 (REP2-022), which has removed 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within the Fylde MCZ in acknowledgment that this is the least recoverable type of protection.	Progressed but not resolved. We note that the Applicant has removed the option of 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within Fylde MCZ in their updated Outline CSIP [REP2-023]. However, we continue to advise that a commitment with the action to remove all on and above seabed infrastructure (including cable/scour protection) within benthic designated sites is secured in the DCO.		Please see the Applicant's response to RI_B2 and RI_B3 above regarding the selection of cable protection type and placement respectively.
RI_B16	Natural England advises that an outline Construction Method Statement and outline CSIP are provided/updated as part of the consenting stage to demonstrate that the WCS has been assessed, and any predicted impacts can be sufficiently mitigated.		The Applicants responded previously to this point raised by Natural England within the responses RR-1601.B 1601.B.16 to 1601.B.18 (PDA-016) regarding cable protection. The Applicants would also highlight the updates made to the Outline CSIP submitted at Deadline 2 (REP2-022), which has removed 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within the Fylde MCZ in acknowledgment that this is the least recoverable type of protection.	No change.		Please see the Applicant's response to RI_B13 above.
RI_B17	Natural England advises that surveys of the recoverability of the seabed, with a focus on sandwave reformation are undertaken to confirm predictions of recovery rates, and monitoring of the impacts of construction activities outside of Fylde MCZ on geomorphological receptors should be included for consideration in the Offshore In Principle Monitoring Plan (OIPMP).		The Applicants responded previously to this matter within the response RR-1601.B 1601.B.24 (PDA-016).	"No change. Natural England's concerns in our Rel Reps [RR-1601] remain. We continue to advise the Applicant to include a commitment to carry out monitoring of: - Sandwave recovery (particularly within Fylde MCZ); and - Dune/beach/intertidal morphology. These should be included for consideration in the OIPMP. In addition, we highlight that the Morgan Generation Project did include adaptive monitoring to monitor the changes to, and recovery of, sandwaves. See [REP5-043] of the Morgan Gen Examination submission. "		It is noted that the Applicants are already committed to monitoring to observe the effect of sediment transport and sediment transport pathways on cable burial and ensure that cables remain buried and adequately protected. as detailed in the Offshore in-principle monitoring plan (oIPMP) (REP3-032). This would therefore encompass areas where sandwave clearance has been undertaken and changes in seabed morphology may occur. With regard to the intertidal area, it is also noted that a further commitment has been made by the Applicants at Deadline 4 stating that no cable/scour protection shall be permanently deployed in the intertidal area between MLWS and MHWS (CoT133, in the updated Commitments Register (F1.5.3/F05). Therefore, there will be no influence on coastal processes in the intertidal area and no need for monitoring at this location. Additionally, of relevance to Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology, the Applicants also included a new commitment to benthic community recovery specific monitoring in the Fylde MCZ through pre and post construction benthic community sampling to monitor for temporal and spatial recovery and the

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
						potential colonisation by INNS on and in the vicinity of any hard substrate in the Fylde MCZ within the Offshore IPMP at Deadline 4 (J20/F03). This is in-line with the approach adopted for the Morgan Generation Assets Project whereby monitoring data is also applicable to the observation of seabed recovery.
RI_B18	Natural England do not agree with the Applicants conclusion of no likelihood of hindering the conservation objectives of Fylde MCZ which has been designated for subtidal sand and subtidal mud. Natural England consider that any placement of scour prevention/cable protection has the potential to disrupt sediment process which could disrupt marine processes and have a lasting impact on interest features over the lifetime of the project and beyond which is potentially irreversible.		The Applicants responded previously regarding cable protection and decommissioning with respect to the Fylde MCZ in response RR-1601 1601.42 (PDA-014). Note: the "RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1" column has been corrected from Red to Orange for this point in this document, to correctly align with the NE Risk and Issue Log. This was raised by the MMO as an error in their WR submission at Deadline 2 (REP2-061; 3.4.3 and 3.5.5).	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_B3 above with regards to placement of external cable protection in the nearshore and Fylde MCZ.
RI_B19	Natural England advises that the Project is likely to cause lasting impacts on benthic features within Fylde MCZ. Natural England have provided further advice on Fylde MCZ in Appendix I.		The Applicants' welcome the decision to resolve this issue at Deadline 2. Response to further comments on the Applicants' In-principle MEEB proposal from 'Tab J Benthic Compensation' of the Risk and Issue Log and Appendix J of NE's Deadline 2 submission are provided in Table 2.12 below, and Appendix A.			The Applicants note that RI_B19 was resolved at Deadline 2.

7.5 Risk and Issues Log – Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology

Table 7-5: Responses to questions regarding Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
Risk and Issues Log Deadline 1 – Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets Appendix C - Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology						
RI_C1	Natural England advises that there are a number of potential impacts both on intertidal and subtidal benthic habitats which have not been adequately considered or assessed within the Environmental Statement (ES). The specifics of which are included in the points within this worksheet.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.1 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	No change.		The Applicants' position remains as outlined in RR-1601.C.1 of their response to Natural England (PDA-017) that all of the relevant potential impact pathways on intertidal and subtidal benthic habitats have been identified and assessed in Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) and in the Marine Conservation Zone Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) with further details on construction scenarios provided in in the Rule 9 – ES assessment of Construction Scenarios (AS-070). The Applicants also highlight their responses to comments RI_C7, RI_C8, RI_C10, RI_C11, RI_C13, RI_C14, RI_C15, RI_C16, RI_C17, RI_C18, RI_C19, RI_C20 and RI_C21 which address comments regarding the benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology maximum design scenario (MDS) and conclude that the assessments conducted have adequately considered the potential impact of the Transmission Assets on this receptor group. The Applicants have also provided a detailed response to the matter in response to Natural England's response to ExQ1 and question 7.1.4 in particular (S_D4_2.6). The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) and the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) for submission at Deadline 5 to include all additional clarifications / justifications provided in submissions at previous deadlines to address Natural England's comments relating to the MDS.
RI_C2	Natural England is concerned that MDS parameters are for cable protection to be installed at any point through the lifetime of the Project (including Operation and Maintenance), rather than the amount that will be required for the construction phase alone. Natural England advises that additional detail is needed on how the potential for the addition of further cable/scour protection during the O&M phase has been considered, and what proportion of the Maximum Design calculations for cable/scour protection the O&M requirements account for both within and outside of the MCZ.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.2 and RR-1601.C.10 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	No change.		In response to Natural England's comments, the Applicants are including a new commitment in the Outline Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan at Deadline 4 (J19/F02) to limit the development of cable/scour protection in the operations and maintenance phase to the first ten years / limit of the MDS (whichever is first) outside the Fylde MCZ and the first two years inside the MCZ. Finally, the Applicants have also made a commitment at Deadline 4 to no deployment of cable/scour protection in the intertidal area between MLWS and MHWS. The Applicants would highlight that this timing is required to allow for any 'snagging' / delays

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
						in construction phase deployment and to cover the Offshore Transmission Owner (OFTO) divestment period. Following this two year period, any further deployment of cable protection during the operation and maintenance phase within the Fylde MCZ would require a new marine licence application. The need for this two-year period is because offshore wind farm developers are only permitted to convey electricity over the transmission assets for a period of 18 months from the issue of a completion notice for the generation assets (also known as the 'commercial operation date' (COD). After this period, the offshore transmission assets must be divested to an offshore transmission asset owner (OFTO) who may require additional works to be undertaken. To continue to generate after 18 months from the completion notice is a criminal offence under the Electricity Act 1989. As requested by Natural England during a meeting on 22 July 2025, the Applicants have provided further clarification on the basis of the two-year period for deployment of further cable protection (up the MDS assessed) in the O&M phase and how that relates to the period between export cable installation and OFTO divestment, nothing that the divestment period would be associated with completion of construction of the Morgan / Morecambe Generation Assets. Natural England also advised that the Applicants need to set out how the benthic monitoring programme would ensure that deployment of additional cable protection in the two-year period would not affect the benthic monitoring programme. With regard to the first point on timing, the programme for construction of the Transmission Assets includes offshore export cable installation as the last activity in the construction programme for Morgan Transmission Assets and for Morecambe Transmission Assets, as set out in section 3.9.1 of the Project Description (REP2-080). This is partly because installation of the offshore export cables will need to align with the latter stages of the construction of the generation assets as the offshore export cables will need to connect to the offshore substation platforms. The basis for the two-year period is therefore the eighteen-month period for divestment of the transmission assets to the OFTO, plus a six-month period to mitigate the completion of the Transmission Assets up to six-months before completion of the Generation Assets. In addition to the monitoring already proposed for the recovery of sediments and seedbed features in the Fylde MCZ, the Applicants have updated the Offshore In Principle Monitoring Plan submitted at Deadline 4 (J19/F02) to also include a commitment

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
						to specific monitoring of the temporal and spatial recovery of benthic communities in the Fylde MCZ through pre and post construction benthic community sampling and of the potential colonisation by Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) following construction activities within the Fylde MCZ. The deployment of addition cable protection during the first two year of the operations and maintenance phase post-construction period will not affect the efficiency of the monitoring programme. The Applicants will ensure that sufficient stations are selected in the Fylde MCZ included in the monitoring programme to include for redundancy in the highly unlikely event that a station selected for the monitoring of the recovery of soft sediments from temporary disturbance is subject to the installation of cable protection during the first two year of the operations and maintenance phase. The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) and the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) for submission at Deadline 5 to include reference to this new commitment.
RI_C3	a) Natural England advises that the Project is likely to cause lasting impacts on benthic features within Fylde MCZ and that the sites 'maintain' conservation objectives will be hindered. b) Every effort should be made to reduce the impacts through the adoption of robust mitigation measures, including commitments to remove infrastructure at the decommissioning phase. c) We advise that the MCZ assessment should proceed to a stage 2 assessment and a without prejudice MEEB case provided.		The Applicants' welcome the decision to resolve this issue at Deadline 2. Response to further comments on the MCZ assessment are addressed in Table 2.11: Responses to questions regarding the Fylde MCZ below.			The Applicants note that this issue was resolved at Deadline 2.
RI_C4	Natural England advises that impacts to priority habitats under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 are avoided and where that is not possible due consideration is demonstrated. Particular consideration should be given to those which are most sensitive and/or listed as threatened/in decline under OSPAR.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.44 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014) and RR-1601.C.4 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to NE6.
RI_C5	Natural England strongly advises that a commitment to remove all infrastructure associated with the development at decommissioning is secured in the DCO. This should be provided in an Outline Decommissioning Plan should also be provided as part of the consent phase to detail the approach to decommissioning.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.42 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014).	Progressed but not resolved. We note that the Applicant has removed the option of 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within Fylde MCZ in their updated Outline CSIP [REP2-023]. However, we continue to advise that a commitment with the action to remove all on and above seabed infrastructure (including		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.42 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014). As detailed in the Outline CSIP (REP2-022), the Transmission Assets design is considering multiple cable protection options. The Outline CSIP (REP2-022) identifies that cable burial is the preferred option for cable protection where practicable (CoT54) and should cable protection be required within the Fylde MCZ, it will be designed to be

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
				cable/scour protection) within benthic designated sites is secured in the DCO.		removable (CoT108) with the requirement for removal agreed with stakeholders and regulators at the time of decommissioning (CoT109). Further to the Applicants' update to the outline CSIP submitted at Deadline 2 (REP2-022), which removed 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within the Fylde MCZ, the Applicants have also included a commitment to 'no rock dumping within Fylde MCZ' in the Draft DCO submitted at Deadline 4 (C1/F06). The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) and the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) for submission at Deadline 5 to include all updated commitments. The use of cable/scour protection, where required, will be evaluated and further considered post-consent in Detailed CSIPs, focusing on both engineering suitability and environmental recoverability. The CSIPs are part of the Offshore Construction Method Statements that are secured in the Draft DCO (AS-004) in: • Condition 18(1)(e)(i) of Schedule 14 for the Morgan Offshore Wind Project: Transmission Assets; and • Condition 18(1)(e)(i) of Schedule 15 for the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm: Transmission Assets. The Applicants will submit a draft decommissioning programme to the Secretary of State as required by the Energy Act 2004 prior to the commencement of construction which will include an assessment of the removal of cable/scour protection. This decommissioning programme will be updated throughout the assets' lifespan to incorporate changing best practice and new technologies. The Applicants have also provided a detailed response to the matter in response to Natural England's response to ExQ1 and question 7.1.5 in particular (S_D4_2.6).
RI_C6	Natural England notes that the Applicants current EIA assessment fails to consider or assess the potential pressures and impacts on the supporting benthic habitats for Special Protection Area (SPA) features, including Liverpool Bay SPA. Full consideration is required to inform a robust assessment of the likely impacts upon designated ornithological features.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.26 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	Progressed but not resolved. In [PDA-014], the Applicant has stated that the total area of potential habitat loss is considered small enough to rule out this impact pathway (long-term loss of habitat supporting prey species). Natural England is satisfied that predicted habitat loss would allow adverse effects on the Liverpool Bay SPA to be ruled out. To fully resolve the issue, we recommend that this information is used to update the relevant parts of the application, in		To resolve this issue, the Applicants have agreed with NE to update the relevant sections of the Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 2 Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment Part Three – Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar Site assessments (APP-107) for submission at Deadline 5 to include the additional clarifications information included in submissions at previous deadlines.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
				particular the Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment. Once updated in relevant application documents this matter can be resolved.		
RI_C7	We advise that the Applicant adequately considers the potential for a four-year gap between the completion of the first project (i.e. Morgan) and the commencement of the second (i.e. Morecambe) for 'Construction Scenario 3b'. We advise the MDS is updated within the Project Description and relevant Chapters to account for this, taking into consideration the potential for the recovery of seabed species and habitats resulting in outdated baseline data. We also advise that the relevant impact assessments are updated and outcomes taken account of in named plans.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.7 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017) and also within the Rule 9 – ES Assessment of Construction Scenarios (AS-070) and Clarification Note: Construction Scenarios - Rev F01(REP1-060).	No change. Natural England's original concerns in our Rel Reps [RR-1601] remain. Whilst we welcome the Applicant's further consideration [AS-070] of the MDS for construction, for the reasons discussed in our Rel Reps, we are concerned that a 'sequential' rather than 'concurrent' construction scenario may be the WCS for impacts to seabed morphology, physical features and adjacent shorelines (e.g. intertidal and nearshore zones, coastal morphology, and Fylde MCZ).		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_B5 above.
RI_C8	It is not clear that the 9% and 10% total cable corridor values for sandwave clearance and cable protection respectively refer to the MDS requirements for each of the individual 6 cables (noting that each will have its own trench) or collectively. Similarly, clarity on the MDS specifications within and outside the Fylde MCZ should be provided. We advise that the MDS for construction and cable protection footprints are reviewed and updated where necessary across all ES chapters and named plans. And specific areas and volumes included for cable protection within and outside Fylde MCZ on the DCO/dML		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.43 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014) and RR-1601.C.8 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	The Applicant has provided further clarification on individual cable vs. collective MDS for sandwave levelling in [PDA-016]. However, please see B10 below in relation to concerns with sandwave levelling. And for cable protection quantities please see B12, B15, B18 and C2, C5, C8, C9 C16, C25		The Applicants note that RI_C8 was resolved at Deadline 2.
RI_C9	Natural England notes that the cable protection types listed within the design envelope (Table 3.7) appear to be contradictory to the commitment for all cable protection to be removable from an environmental perspective. Due consideration should be given to the nature of the cable protection used and should favour those engineering options with the greatest likelihood of successful removal, from an environmental perspective, at the Projects' end of life.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.9 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017) and RI_C9 within the Annex 3.3 to Applicants' Response to WRs: Response to Natural England's Risk and Issues Log – Rev F01 (REP2-034). The Applicants would also draw attention to the updated outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan submitted at Deadline 2 (REP2-022), which removed 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within the Fylde MCZ.	Progressed but not resolved. We note that the Applicant has removed the option of 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within Fylde MCZ in their updated Outline CSIP [REP2-023]. However, we continue to advise that a commitment with the action to remove all on and above seabed infrastructure (including cable/scour protection) within benthic designated sites is secured in the DCO.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_C5 above.

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RI_C10	a) Natural England advises that clarity is provided within the Application documents on the likely impacts from using Direct Pipe cable installation techniques. We advise that the following is provided and updated within the Application documents: - Scour protection requirements at the direct pipe exit and/or entry locations; - Cable/scour protection requirements in the intertidal and subsequent mitigation; and - MDS for the sum of both projects for 'maximum cofferdam area dimensions' to be included in Tables 3.6 and 3.13. b) We also advise that a landfall management plan should be provided in outline at the time of consent. All landfall impacts, including subtidal impacts, should be considered collectively to determine management/mitigation measures to ensure that significant impacts (both direct and indirect) are avoided to designated site features.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.11 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	"No change. Please aslo see our answers to the ExA Q7.1.4 and Q7.1.6 and our comment in RI_B13 with regards to cable/scour protection mitigation in the nearshore and the landfall management plan. We note the Applicant's response in ([PDA-017], 1601.C11), which states that no cable / scour protection will be required between MLWS and MHWS, we therefore advise that CoT114 is updated to include this wording."		The Applicants have responded to each of the points made by NE below. Additionally, under each point, any updates required to application documents at Deadline 5 are set out to ensure that Natural England and the Examining Authority are aware of what will be provided at Deadline 5, where relevant. **Scour protection requirements at the direct pipe exit and in the intertidal** With regards to the requirements for scour protection at the direct pipe exit and/or entry locations and cable/scour protection requirements in the intertidal, as outlined in the Applicants' response to RR.1601.C.11 (PDA-017), the Applicants have made a commitment (CoT114) to ensure that all permanent infrastructure (i.e. the offshore export cables) located between mean low water springs (MLWS) and mean high water springs (MHWS) will be buried to a target depth of 3 m. Further to this, the Applicants have included a clear commitment that no cable/scour protection shall be permanently deployed in the intertidal area between MLWS and MHWS in the Commitments Register submitted at Deadline 4 (CoT133; F1.5.3/F05). **MDS for cofferdams** With regards to Natural England's request for the sum of both projects for 'maximum cofferdam area dimensions' to be included in Tables 3.6 and 3.13, the Applicants have responded to this in full in the Applicants' response to RR.1601.C.11 (PDA-017). The maximum design parameters have not been provided for the sum of both projects in Tables 3.6 and 3.13 of Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description (REP2-008) because only Morgan OWL or Morecambe OWL are able to undertake work on the beach at any given time as detailed in section 3.10.2 and section 3.14.5.15 of Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description (REP2-008). The Applicants have made a commitment (CoT27) to remove temporary construction compounds (including cofferdams) and reinstate the site once construction has been completed. This is secured in Requirements 8 and 16 of Schedules 2A & 2B of the draft DCO (REP3-009).Therefore, cofferdams required by Morgan OWL and Morecambe OWL would not be constructed in the intertidal at the same time. *Application document updates for Deadline 5:*

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
						The explanation for the cofferdam MDS was set out in Annex 5.3 to the Applicants response to ISH1 Hearing Action Points (REP1-040). Therefore, the Applicants will update the Project Description and relevant ES chapters at Deadline 5 to ensure that the MDS for cofferdams is clear. **Outline landfall management plan** The Applicants have responded to this point in in response to Natural England response to ExQ1 against question 7.1.4 (S_D4_2.6) and against RI_B13 above. The Applicants will prepare an outline landfall construction method statement to address Natural England's request. It has not been possible to prepare this in time for Deadline 4 and therefore the Applicants intend to submit this document into the examination in w/c 18 August 2025 (which will be subject to acceptance by the ExA). The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) and the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) for submission at Deadline 5 to include all additional clarifications / justifications provided in submissions at previous deadlines to address Natural England's comments relating to the MDS and to demonstrate that the MDS has been assessed.
RI_C11	Natural England advises that a further assessment of the feasibility of the cable installation tools in shallow waters is required to support the worst-case scenario assessment.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.B.11 of their response to Natural England – Appendix B (PDA-016).	No change.		Please see the Applicants response to RI_B10 above. The Applicants have also provided a detailed response to the matter in response to Natural England's response to ExQ1 and question 7.1.4 in particular (S_D4_2.6).
RI_C12	Natural England advises that storage options for material from the landfall exit pits and open cut trenching are explored to minimise impacts and allow for sufficient back filling.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.B.20 of their response to Natural England – Appendix B (PDA-016) and RR-1601.C.13 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	No change.		The Applicants have provided a detailed response to the point raised by Natural England, in regard to the use of excavated material, in RR-1601.B.20 (PDA-016) and RR-1601.C.13 (PDA-017). The storage of material excavated from the landfall exit pits and open cut trenching is only required for the short durations that the excavations are open, with the excavated material stored next to the exit pits and trenches. Once the cable ducts are installed, the exit pits will be backfilled with the excavated material; first with the subsoil, followed by the upper layers of sediment and land reinstatement back in its previous use, thereby

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						maintaining existing shoreline characteristics and sediment transport processes. The Applicants have made a commitment (CoT44 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments Register of the ES (AS-030) that the landfall exit pits will exit the beach at least 100 m from the western boundary of the Lytham St. Annes Dunes SSSI. Works in the intertidal will most likely be undertaken at low tide utilising temporary cofferdams. The temporary cofferdams will provide a dry environment, allowing excavated sediment to be retained within the immediate area, ensuring minimal sediment loss. This is secured by Requirement 8 within Schedules 2A & 2B] of the draft Development Consent Order (AS-004). Detailed CoCP will be implemented by the Applicants as approved by Natural England, Environment Agency and the MMO for intertidal and offshore works, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, as appropriate. The use of cofferdams will enable direct backfilling of excavated material into the pit following cable installation, reducing the risk of sediment dispersion and eliminating the need for separate off-site or intertidal storage options. As set out in response to RI_C10 above, the Applicants will prepare an outline landfall construction method statement. It has not been possible to prepare this in time for Deadline 4 and therefore the Applicants intend to submit this document into the examination in w/c 18 August 2025 (which will be subject to acceptance by the ExA). The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical Processes (APP-042) Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) for submission at Deadline 5 to include all additional clarifications / justifications provided in submissions at previous deadlines to address Natural England's comments relating to installation activities in the intertidal.
RI_C13	Natural England notes that the MDS for Pre-Lay Grapnel Run (PLGR), Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) clearance and boulder clearance have not been fully assessed within the ES Chapters. There is no certainty that these activities will be undertaken at the same time or within the same footprint as the other site preparation activities especially in relation to boulder relocation. We advise that the MDS for PLGR, UXO clearance and boulder clearance are presented within the Project Description and all other relevant chapters in line with Natural England's Best Practice Guidance Phase III.		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.B.6 of their response to Natural England – Appendix B (PDA-016) and RR-1601.C.14 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	No change.		The Applicants have responded to this point in full in the Applicants' response to RR.1601.B.9 (PDA-016) and RR.1601.C.14 (PDA-017) but reorganised the response below to aid in explaining the Applicants' position. • The MDS for sandwave clearance footprint is 9% of the Morgan offshore export cables and 9% of the Morecambe offshore export cables with a footprint width of 60 m for Morgan offshore export cables and 48 m for Morecambe offshore export cables. • The MDS for pre-lay grapnel runs (PLGR) / boulder clearance does not include the areas

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						where sandwave clearance has occurred as sandwave clearance would either remove the need for PLGR / boulder clearance, or those activities would occur within the disturbance footprint of sandwave clearance, i.e. sandwave clearance swathe is 60 m wide for Morgan cables and 48 m wide for Morecambe cables centred on each offshore export cable route, whilst the swathe for PLGR / boulder clearance is 20 m wide centred on each offshore export cable route. • In the event that sandwave clearance is not required and boulder clearance is required along 100% of offshore export cables, then this remains within the MDS assessed as the width of disturbance for boulder clearance is 20 m and so well within the width of disturbance assessed for sandwave clearance. • For the remaining 91% of the Morgan and Morecambe cables where sandwave clearance is not expected to be required, the MDS assumes repeat disturbance of the same 20 m wide swathe centred on each export cables route due to boulder clearance (by plough or grab) (PLGR and UXO clearance (if required) as set out in section 3.12.3 of the Project Description chapter (REP2-008)). Where a high density of boulders is seen, the expectation is that a boulder plough will be required to clear the installation corridor. Where medium and low densities of boulders are present, a sub-sea grab is expected to be employed. In either case, boulders will be side cast to the edge of the 20 m installation corridor. • An assessment of temporary habitat disturbance from unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance is provided in paragraph 2.11.2.37 of the Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology chapter (APP-045). Low order UXO clearance would only be attempted for UXO found lying within the 20 m wide installation corridor (or up to 48 and 60 m for sandwave clearance over 9% of the export cable route as stated above). The Benthic subtidal and intertidal assessment established that for high order clearance, craters of up to 12.61 m are likely for up to 25 UXO clearance events. However, given that the Applicants have restricted to the draft DCO (REP3-009) to low order UXO clearance, any craters generated through clearance are expected to be significantly smaller than 12.61 m. In summary, • Over 9% of the offshore export cable routes, the MDS is sandwave clearance, boulder clearance,

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						PLGR and low order UXO clearance with sandwave clearance dictating the width of the installation corridor (up to 60 m for Morgan and 48 m for Morecambe). • Over the remaining 91% of the offshore export cable routes, boulder clearance, PLGR and low order UXO clearance dictates the width of the installation corridor which is 20 m wide for all cables. Sandwave clearance, boulder clearance, PLGR and low order UXO clearance are likely to be undertaken at different times within the construction phase, which is why the Applicants have assessed these activities in the Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology chapter (APP-045) as 'repeat disturbance', but they would still be confined temporally to the overall discrete construction phase. The Applicants therefore consider that the assessment has been undertaken in accordance with section 7.2.2 of Natural England's Best Practice Guidance Phase III, which provides advice for specific aspects of an offshore wind farm which should be considered within the application including seabed preparation. Based on this advice all necessary aspects of seabed preparation have been considered (sandwave clearance, pre-lay grapnel run, boulder clearance and UXO clearance). *Application document updates for Deadline 5:* The information above is set out in both the Project Description chapter (REP2-008) (section 3.12.3) and the Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) (section 2.9), however, the Applicants will update both chapters, and the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059) to include this additional clarification/justification.
RI_C14	Natural England advises that it is not clear how the MDS for sandwave clearance and seabed preparation has been derived. Natural England advises that the Applicant provides all the parameters associated with sandwave clearance and seabed preparation that were used to calculate the total MDS figure for 'sandwave clearance: offshore export cable (m3)' inside and outside of designated sites. These should be included and updated in the Project Description and the relevant Chapters in the ES to ensure that the impacts have been fully assessed.		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.B.6 and RR-1601.B.10 of their response to Natural England – Appendix B (PDA-016) and RR-1601.C.15 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	No change. We note the Applicant's response to our Relevant Reps and acknowledge that sandwave impact width and length have been provided [PDA-016]. However, it is still not clear if all of the parameters have been provided to determine the total spoil volume. Additionally, this has not been broken down into individual sandwave clearance/seabed preparation activities. Once all of the parameters have been provided and included in the ES		Please see the Applicants response to RI_B9 above.
RI_C15	Natural England notes that the MDS sandwave clearance requirements stated are inconsistent between the Project Description [APP-024] and Benthic ES Chapter [APP-045] and named plans.		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.B.6 and RR-	No change.		The Applicants confirm that Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology (APP-045) will be updated in line with Table 1.1 of REP1-064 and will be submitted at Deadline 5.

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	No MDS figures for construction footprints have been presented within the Project Description. Natural England advises the maximum temporary construction footprints are reviewed and updated where necessary across the Application documents.		1601.B.8 of their response to Natural England – Appendix B (PDA-016) and RR-1601.C.16 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017). The Applicants note the response from Natural England regarding this matter at Deadline 2. Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology (APP-045) will be updated in line with Table 1.1 of REP1-064 at Deadline 6.			
RI_C16	Natural England notes that within the CSIP it is stated that the distance between the cable crossings means that there will be separation in cable protection (rock armouring/mattress) making one linear line of protection. Natural England is concerned about the potential physical processes and benthic impacts from this which have not been assessed. We also assume that because this protection would be considered as cable crossing it would be considered permanent. Natural England advises that cable crossing requirements and impacts are reassessed to ensure that the MDS/WCS has been assessed.		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.17 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	Resolved. The Applicant has provided further clarification on this matter in [PDA-017]. We also note the Applicant has submitted their Stage 2 MCZ Assessment and without prejudice MEEB at Deadline 1 which includes further information regarding cable crossings in Fylde MCZ.		The Applicants note that RI_C16 was resolved at Deadline 3.
RI_C17	Natural England is not clear how 14 cable repairs of a length of 56km has been determined. Currently as written, the cable repairs could be of any length. There is therefore a lack in consistency in WCS for cable repairs presented across the project description and named plans within and outside of designated sites. Natural England advises that clarification is provided by the Applicant on the maximum number of repairs per cable and in total, maximum length of each cable repair. Assessments and named plans should be updated accordingly.		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.18 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	No change. We note the Applicant's response in ([PDA-017], 1601.C.18). Our original comment was specifically in relation to how the cable repair parameters were written in the OOOMP [APP-224].		The Applicants have responded to this point in full in the Applicants' response to RR.1601.C.18 (PDA-017). In summary, the MDS for cable repairs is for: • Morgan export cable subtidal repairs: up to 4 km per event, with up to 14 subtidal cable repair events, over the lifetime of the assets (totalling 56 km). • Morecambe export cable subtidal repairs: up to 4 km per event, with up to 7 subtidal cable repair events, over the lifetime of the assets (totally 28 km). The parameters provided for cable repairs are aligned between Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project Description (REP2-008) and the Outline Offshore Operations and Maintenance Plan (APP-224). The Applicants will provide further detail regarding the basis for the MDS for each project at Deadline 5.
RI_C18	Natural England does not agree with the statement that there was a "relatively low abundance of burrows overall" that "were not		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England	No change.		With regards to Natural England's comments advising that the ES should be updated to accurately reflect the findings and conclusions of the

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	consistent with a confident classification as the 'sea pen and burrowing megafauna communities'. We note that this statement is contradictory to the findings of the Technical Report [APP-046] which found burrows to be 'common' in some locations, and therefore more numerous than the 'frequent' threshold required to meet the OSPAR definition for 'sea pen and burrowing megafauna communities'. Natural England advises that (a) the ES is updated to accurately reflect the findings and conclusions of the technical report. And (b) where possible, impacts to these Features of Conservation Interest (FOCI) are minimised. To inform the updates Natural England also advises that the EIA should be updated, and appropriate sensitivity attributed to the benthic communities assessed as determined using MarESA.		within RR-1601.C.21 and RR-1601.C.27 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).			technical report, the Applicants' position remains as outlined in RR-1601.C.21 that a precautionary approach has been adopted which has assumed that the presence of burrows corresponds to the presence of the seapens and burrowing megafauna communities' habitat as defined by OSPAR. However, the wording in Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology (APP-045) will be updated in line with the wording in Volume 2, Annex 2.1: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology technical report (APP-046), as requested by Natural England, and will be submitted at Deadline 5. With regards to Natural England's comments advising that the EIA should be updated, and appropriate sensitivity attributed to the benthic communities assessed as determined using MarESA, the Applicants' position remains as outlined in RR-1601.C.27. The approach taken is appropriate and sufficiently precautionary for the communities identified in the benthic ecology site-specific survey. The Applicants maintains that adjusting the sensitivity of the seapens and burrowing megafauna communities IEF from 'high' (as per the Marine Evidence based Sensitivity Assessment (MarESA); Hill et al. (2023)) to 'medium' is appropriate for the communities identified in the benthic ecology site-specific survey of the Transmission Assets. This is on the basis that the high sensitivity rating of this habitat in the MarESA is primarily driven by the fragile nature of seapens as an epifaunal species. The Applicants highlight that this approach is consistent with the approach adopted (i.e. tailoring the sensitivity of the seapens and burrowing megafauna communities receptor) in the benthic ecology chapters of the Morgan Generation Assets (Morgan Offshore Wind Ltd (2024) and the Morecambe Generation Assets (Morecambe Offshore Windfarm Ltd, 2024). Even if, as Natural England requests, a sensitivity of high were to be applied to the seapens and burrowing megafauna communities IEF, according to the matrix in Table 2.16 of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045), the range of significance would remain as minor to moderate. In this instance the Applicants would conclude that, on the basis of the intermittent nature of the impact over the construction phase, together with the absence of seapens (as above, none were identified through surveys) and the predicted resilience (i.e. recovery) of the key part of the community recorded in the Transmission Assets (i.e. the burrowing megafauna component of the habitat) which the MarESA states is medium, the

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						significance would remain as minor adverse and so not significant in EIA terms. The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology (APP-045) for Deadline 5 to capture the above.
RI_C19	It does not appear that that the duration, nature or area of seabed impacts from UXO clearance has been quantified or assessed within the ES chapters. We therefore require evidence that seabed depressions from both UXO detonations and jack-up legs will back-fill with similar sediment type and over what duration. Natural England requires the Applicant to quantify and evaluate the worst-case impacts from UXO clearance and jack-up events.		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.B.14 of their response to Natural England – Appendix B (PDA-016) and RR-1601.C.22 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017). The Applicants also confirmed within RR-1601.37 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014) that high order UXO detonation has been removed from the draft DCO (REP2-004) at Deadline 1.	No change.		With regard to UXO clearance, please see the Applicants response to 092.1 in the Applicants response to Appendix C3 to Natural England's Deadline 3 Submission (S_D4_2.6) which covers this matter. With regard to jack-up vessels, jack-up footprint depressions would occur in sandy/loose material as the equipment is installed. On removal the depression would be partially infilled by gravity and then, over time, be infilled by the mobile seabed sediments. The extent of temporary depressions, following completion of jack-up operations, would be limited to the immediate area therefore, short term changes to bathymetry would have negligible impacts on tidal currents and sediment transport regimes. Monitoring at the Barrow offshore wind farm showed jack-up depressions associated with turbine installation were almost entirely infilled 12 months after construction (BOWind, 2008) noting that cable lay jack-up vessel proposed for the Transmission Assets has a much smaller footprint than that required for turbine installation. Although the monitoring study was undertaken during the first year of operation of Barrow Offshore Wind Farm (post construction monitoring initiated July 2006) it included oceanography, seabed morphology (scour etc.) and bathymetry. The wind farm is located in the east Irish Sea near Barrow-in Furness and therefore provides relevant, applicable datasets in compliance with regulatory standards. Additionally, of relevance to Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology, the Applicants included a new commitment to benthic community recovery specific monitoring in the Fylde MCZ through pre and post construction benthic community sampling to monitor for temporal and spatial recovery and the potential colonisation by INNS on and in the vicinity of any hard substrate in the Fylde MCZ within the Offshore IPMP at Deadline 4 (J20/F03).The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) and Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical processes (APP-042), for submission at Deadline 5 to include all additional clarifications/justifications provided in submissions at previous deadlines to address Natural England's comments relating to UXO clearance.

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RI_C20	Natural England advises that the ES Benthic Chapter [APP-045] is updated to consider impacts from construction of exit pits and/or cofferdam installation (where necessary) and associated site access and ancillary construction work areas. It has also not been stated whether or not scour protection may be required at the exit pit locations and whether any such requirements would be temporary or permanent.		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.B.11, RR-1601.B.19 and RR-1601.B.20 of their response to Natural England – Appendix B (PDA-016) and RR-1601.C.23 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	No change.		As outlined in the Applicants' response to RR-1601.C.23 (PDA-017) the MDS for impacts to benthic intertidal receptors has been fully assessed in section 2.11.2 (in relation to temporary habitat loss/disturbance) and section 2.11.3 (in relation to increases in suspended sediment concentrations and associated deposition) of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045). Table 2.12 of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) states that a combination of open cut trenching and marinised trenching represents the MDS for impacts to benthic intertidal receptors. The Applicants have made a new commitment at Deadline 4 as set out in the Commitments Register (F1.3.5 / F05) that no cable/scour protection will be permanently deployed in the intertidal zone between MLWS and MHWS. This would therefore include the cofferdams. The Applicants has also committed to preparing an outline landfall construction method statement which the Applicants will request to submit into the Examination in w/c 18 August 2025 in order that it can be fully reviewed by NE. The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) and Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical processes (APP-042), for submission at Deadline 5 to include the clarification that impacts from construction of exit pits and/or cofferdam installation are within the MDS assessed.
RI_C21	Natural England notes that open cut trenching is likely to be required for each of the 6 cables at landfall. However, it does not appear that the MDS duration, nature or extent of benthic and water quality impacts from open cut trenching has been quantified or assessed. Natural England advises that the EIA and where relevant, MCZ assessments and named plans are updated to consider these impacts including an update with accurate worst-case prediction values for Suspended Sediment Concentrations (SSCs) arising from trenching in the Export Cable Corridor (ECC).		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.24 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	No change.		As outlined in the Applicants' response to RR-1601.C.24 (PDA-017) the Applicants can confirm that, as detailed in Table 2.12 of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045), the MDS for temporary habitat loss/disturbance to intertidal benthic receptors includes a 300 m long open cut trench for each of the six offshore export cables from the point that the trenchless techniques exit on the beach. The MDS also includes for marinised trenching for the remaining length of the intertidal area. Marinised trenching is a method of trenching which will be undertaken in the wet (i.e. rather than in the dry when the tide is out) which includes machine-instigated initiation of backfill of the trench to support natural backfill. Table 2.12 of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) also explains that open-cut trenching represents the MDS for increases in suspended sediment concentrations and sediment deposition as a result of cable installation within the intertidal area. The Applicants confirm the MDS has been assessed. The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045)

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						and Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical processes (APP-042), for submission at Deadline 5 to include the clarification that impacts from construction of exit pits and/or cofferdam installation are within the MDS assessed.
RI_C22	Natural England notes that for cable landfall works there is a requirement for 2 x jack-up vessel deployments per cable out to KP10. Natural England queries how avoidance of benthic interest features and designated sites have been demonstrated? Natural England advises that as matter of best practice, the use of jack-up vessels should be excluded from benthic MPAs. Otherwise, clear justification as to why this is not possible and evidence of how impacts can be mitigated should be provided with evidence to support successful mitigation. a) We advise more detail and assessment is required regarding cable installation in shallow water depths below 11m in the ES Chapter and named plans. b) We also advise that an Outline Cable Landfall plan is provided and submitted into examination.		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.25 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	Progressed but not resolved. We welcome the Applicant's response stating the refinement of the MDS to account for one jack-up event per cable rather than 2 [PDA-017]. However, we advise that this should be updated in the relevant Application documents. Our other concerns (points a) and b)) still remain.		Regarding point 'a', the Applicants can confirm that the MDS assessed in Volume 2, Chapter 2: benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) already accounts for one jack-up event, in the subtidal, per cable within the Fylde MCZ to support export cable pull in at the landfall. The other jack-up will be outside of the Fylde MCZ between its east boundary and the intertidal area. As the assessment already assumes this no updates to the MDS are required but the Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) and the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) for submission at Deadline 5 to ensure that this is clear. With regards to Natural England's request for more detail and assessment regarding cable installation in shallow water depths, please see the Applicants' response to RI_B10 and RI_C11. With regards to point 'b' the Applicants has also committed to preparing an outline landfall construction method statement which, subject to acceptance by the ExA, will be submitted into the Examination in w/c 18 August 2025.
RI_C23	Natural England strongly advises that the Applicant's commitments; CoT108 and CoT109 should include removal of all cable protection at the decommissioning phase within Fylde MCZ, rather than only stating it will be designed to be removable. This should be provided in an Outline Decommissioning plan.		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.42 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014).	Progressed but not resolved. We note that the Applicant has removed the option of 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within Fylde MCZ in their updated Outline CSIP [REP2-023]. However, we continue to advise that a commitment with the action to remove all on and above seabed infrastructure (including cable/scour protection) within benthic designated sites is secured in the DCO.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_C5.
RI_C24	Natural England notes that dredge disposal activities including sandwave clearance will be conducted throughout the Transmission Assets Order Limits. We highlight that no commitments have been proposed to mitigate impacts either within or outside of benthic designated sites, with the exception of CoT116 which states immediately adjacent to the impact occurring to enable recovery. Natural England advises that mitigation measures should be adopted by the Applicant and the relevant documents updated accordingly. More specifically, disposal options should be explored to ensure that sediment is		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.31 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	Progressed but not resolved. We welcome the Applicant's update in [REP2-023] however mitigation should go further as per our original comment.		The Applicants can confirm that within the Fylde MCZ, the Control Flow Excavator will be the only method used for sandwave clearance. The Applicants will update the Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan (CSIP) (REP2-022), Project Description (REP2-008) and the Dredging and disposal - site characterisation plan (APP-227) at Deadline 5 to remove reference to 'dredging' as a sandwave clearance method in the Fylde MCZ. As noted by Natural England, the Applicants have also made a commitment (CoT116 of Volume 1,

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	deposited in areas of similar sediment character, adjacent and upstream of the levelling location, and using a fallpipe so that the risk of permanently altering the sediment character in any given location is minimised.					Annex 5.3: Commitments Register of the ES (AS-030) to ensure that any material arising from sandwave clearance within the Transmission Assets Order Limits will be deposited in close proximity to the works. This is secured by paragraph 2(f) and Condition 16(4) within Schedules 14 & 15 of the draft Development Consent Order (REP 3-009). CoT116 and the methods highlighted in the Outline CSIP (APP-220) means that material will naturally be deposited locally in areas of similar sediment type. The Applicants note that it is not in their interests to move the sediment further than necessary from its original location and, therefore, consider that the Outline CSIP and existing commitment (CoT116) in addition to the new commitment to only restrict sandwave clearance, where required, in the Fylde MCZ to the Control Flow Excavator method should be sufficient to provide Natural England with the necessary comfort that sediment will be deposited in areas of similar sediment character. .
RI_C25	Natural England welcomes the commitment to micro-site the cables to further reduce the need for cable protection. However, this is not included within the commitments log or secured so it can't currently be considered mitigation. Natural England advises that proposed mitigation measures are secured within a named plan or on the face of the DCO/dML.		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.33 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	No change.		The Applicants have updated the Commitments Register submitted at Deadline 4 (F1.5.3/F05) to include a commitment that, as part of the detailed design process, micro-siting of the offshore export cables within the corridors will be considered where successful burial could pose a challenge or where a higher risk of remedial works such as external cable protection may be required (see CoT134).
RI_C26	Natural England does not agree with the 35 year duration which has been stated as the duration for which subtidal habitat loss will occur. Natural England advises that in the current absence of commitments to remove cable/scour protection, then the loss should be assessed as permanent. Natural England advises that the EIA should be updated with more appropriate descriptions of the timescales associated with impacts and assessment adjusted accordingly.		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.42 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014) and within RR-1601.C.34 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	No change.		The Applicants can confirm that permanent habitat loss/alteration, arising in the event that cable protection is not removed during the decommissioning phase, is assessed in paragraphs 2.11.5.22 *et seq*. of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045). Habitat loss arising during the O&M lifetime only (i.e. in the event that cable protection is fully decommissioned) is assessed in paragraphs 2.11.5.1 to 2.11.5.21 of Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045). The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) for submission at Deadline 5 to ensure that the wording around long-term and permanent habitat loss is clear.
RI_C27	Natural England advises that the monitoring proposed within the Offshore In Principal Monitoring Plan (OIPMP) currently appears to focus on physical/sediment recovery and lacks sufficient ecological context. Natural England		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.35 of their	No change.		In addition to the monitoring already proposed for the recovery of sediments and seedbed features in the Fylde MCZ, the Applicants have updated the Offshore In Principle Monitoring Plan and submitted at Deadline 4 (J20/F02) to include a commitment to

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	advises that the rationale within Table 1.3 of the OIPMP needs to be updated to additionally include “temporal and spatial changes in benthic communities and their recoverability….” in order for the OIPMP to meet its objective.		response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).			specific monitoring of the temporal and spatial recovery of benthic communities in the Fylde MCZ through pre and post construction benthic community sampling and of the potential colonisation by Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) following construction activities within the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) for submission at Deadline 5 to include this updated monitoring commitment.
RI_C28	From the information and figures presented ([APP-019] 1.8.2.31), it is not possible to determine whether the subtidal mud habitat type and NERC (2006) Priority habitat ‘Burrowing megafauna communities’ (as mapped in Figure 1.21 of the Benthic Technical report) overlap with the Fylde MCZ boundary. Site-specific benthic characterisation baseline should be presented together with the MCZ boundary in a single figure so that the habitats present can be checked against those assessed within the MCZ assessment report.		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.43 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017) and an updated figure was included in the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment submitted at Deadline 1 (REP1-059). This is also included in the Errata document submitted at Deadline 2 (REP2-028). This errata has no impact on the conclusions of the MCZ assessment. The Applicants can confirm that the ‘seapen and burrowing megafauna communities’ important ecological factor (IEF) was not recorded at any stations sampled within the Fylde MCZ. The sample station in closest proximity to the Fylde MCZ where the ‘seapen and burrowing megafauna communities’ IEF was recorded was ENV124 which was located 86 m to the west of the Fylde MCZ boundary (please also see response RI_C28 of the Annex 3.3 to Applicants’ Response to WRs: Response to Natural England’s Risk and Issues Log – Rev F01 (REP2-034)).	"Progressed: We welcome the Applicants updated figure in [REP1-059] which overlays the site-specific benthic characterisation baseline and the MCZ boundary. Whilst we note the Applicant's response, we highlight that the figure indicates that potential sea pen and burrowing megafauna habitat overlaps with the cable corridor and Fylde MCZ. Therefore our position in this comment and point RI_18 remain unchanged. We further stress the need for adequate mitigation as stated in RI_C4. "		As outlined in paragraph A.1.5.2.6 of the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059), the seapens and burrowing megafauna habitat was identified at sample stations to the west of the Fylde MCZ (outside of its boundary). The station in closest proximity to the Fylde MCZ was located 86 m from the boundary. Although the extent of this habitat as displayed in Figure A.3 of the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059) indicates that it overlaps with the Fylde MCZ the sample station where the habitat was precautionarily identified lies outside the boundary of the Fylde MCZ and the area of overlap represents a precautionary buffer around this sample station where the seapens and burrowing megafauna habitat could occur. None of the sample stations within the Fylde MCZ were identified as representing the seapens and burrowing megafauna habitat and so mitigation is required in this regard. The Applicants will update the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) for submission at Deadline 5 to include the updated figure from REP1-059 and additional clarifications / justifications provided in submissions at previous deadlines to address Natural England’s comments relating to the presence of the seapens and burrowing megafauna habitat within the Fylde MCZ.
RI_C29	Please see comments C28 – C33 regarding mitigation which are equally applicable to this section and Fylde MCZ.		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England in relation to mitigation and the Fylde MCZ within RR-1601.42, RR-1601.43 and	No change.		With regards to Natural England’s comments relating to mitigation please see the Applicants’ response to RI_C4.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
			RR-1601.43 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014) and within RR-1601.C.28 to RR-1601.C.33 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).			
RI_C30	Natural England advises that the adoption of mitigation measures via a Benthic Mitigation Plan, and associated monitoring in the Offshore In-Principle Monitoring Plan are further considered in order that impacts (particularly permanent loss), on the more sensitive Section 41 Habitats are avoided and/or reduced wherever feasible through mitigation measures such as micro-siting.		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.31, RR-1601.C.32 and RR-1601.C.35 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	No change.		During a meeting between the Applicants and Natural England on 22 July 2025, this matter was discussed, where the Applicants explained its position that a commitment to avoid the most sensitive and or priority habitats designated under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 was justified or required due to the Applicants having taken all reasonable measures (via project design changes and commitments) to minimise impacts to all benthic habitats, including habitats of principal importance. Natural England advised the Applicants to set out its case clearly demonstrating how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied and the commitments made, which the Applicants have set out within the Applicants' response to RI_C4, With regards to Natural England's comments relating to benthic monitoring commitments please see the Applicants' response to RI_C27.

7.6 Risk and Issues Log – Fish and Shellfish Ecology

Table 7-6: Responses to questions regarding Fish and Shellfish Ecology

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
Risk and Issues Log Deadline 1 – Fish and Shellfish Ecology Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets Appendix D - Fish and Shellfish Ecology						
RI_D1	Natural England do not agree that smelt should be screened out. There is potential for EMF to cause barrier effects that hinder smelt movements in and out of the estuary. Minimum and maximum target burial depths between 0.5 m and 3 m are detailed for the marine component. The Applicant should provide further detail on proposed cable depth below the riverbed and detail pertaining to EMF from the cable below the Ribble Estuary MCZ and this should be used to appropriately assess EMF impacts.		The Applicants provided a response on this comment relating to the potential impacts of EMFs on smelt in the Ribble Estuary MCZ (PDA-014, RR-1601, 1601.47). This issue has been agreed with the Environment Agency, which considers the matter closed (REP1-076, 076.4) (please also see response RI_D1 of the Annex 3.3 to Applicants' Response to WRs: Response to Natural England's Risk and Issues Log – Rev F01 (REP2-034)).	No change. EMF is a growing area of potential concern and lacking in evidence. Natural England continue to advise that the potential impacts should be assessed. Also see NE's response to ExA Q1 - Q7.2.3.		The Applicants acknowledge the uncertainties associated with electromagnetic field impacts on fish species including smelt. However, little uncertainty exists concerning the physical dissipation of EMFs with increasing distance from the cable, as set out in section 3.11.7 of Volume 2, Chapter 3: Fish and shellfish ecology (APP-048). As the cables across the Ribble Estuary will be buried to depths of 7-45 m, there will be no detectable EMF emissions into the Ribble Estuary beyond natural background levels. Therefore, the proposed monitoring is not justified or proportionate to the negligible risk of EMF emissions causing barrier effects to smelt at the Ribble Estuary crossing.
RI_D2	Natural England recommend that an assessment of the long-term loss of seabed habitat that potentially supports prey species for the ornithological features of Liverpool Bay SPA is included. This should be based on an assessment of the area of suitable spawning and other supporting habitat for prey species (sandeel) that could be lost due to the construction of the cable corridor. The MDS states that cable protection will be designed to be removable, however there is no commitment to remove upon decommissioning. Sandeel exhibit high site fidelity and leaving cable covering in situ during decommissioning phase would be considered permanent habitat loss. Natural England also advises that the Applicant commit to removing all cable protection within Fylde MCZ at the time of decommissioning or assess permanent habitat loss of supporting prey species for Liverpool Bay SPA.		The Applicants previously provided a response to this point and has assessed the potential impacts of long-term loss of seabed habitat and impacts on prey species (see PDA-014, RR-1601, 1601.46).	In progress. Natural England notes the justification in the Applicants response to NE's Relevant Representations comment RR-1601.49 in relation to Offshore Ornithology and long-term loss of habitat supporting prey species for the features of Liverpool Bay SPA in PDA-014. We also note the response to 1601.46 in relation to Fish and Shellfish Ecology. To fully resolve this issue the quantification utilised in RR-1601.49 should also be applied in the context of suitable spawning areas for prey species across the cable corridor within the Liverpool Bay SPA which could be lost during construction. This information should be updated in the relevant parts of the application, in particular the ISAA.		The Applicants welcome the comment from Natural England that the response has resolved this issue. The Applicants have committed to update information in HRA Stage 2 Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment Part Three (APP-017) at Deadline 5.
RI_D3	There is potential for permanent habitat loss for sandeel and herring resulting from UXO and jack up barges altering sediment compositions. It is not clear whether this has been assessed. UXO clearance and jack up barges		The Applicants have assessment the potential impacts of UXO and jack-up barges as temporary habitat loss/disturbance (Volume 2, Chapter 3: Fish and shellfish ecology, APP-048, section 3.11.2), with recovery of sediments explained within this	No change. Natural England welcomes the removal of high order UXO detonation, however maintain that UXO clearance and jack up barges need assessing for effects from permanent habitat loss. This is particularly		The Applicants note the comments from Natural England. However, as outlined in Volume 2, Chapter 3: Fish and shellfish ecology, section 3.11.2 (APP-048), evidence indicates that depressions recover to baseline conditions typically within one to three years, and as such this impact will be temporary, with no lasting changes to sediment/substrate

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	need assessing for effects from permanent habitat loss on sandeel and herring.		section. The Applicant's response to Natural England's Relevant Representation (PDA-018, RR-1601.D, 1601.D.3) provides clarity on this point.	important for areas of mixed sediment where the depressions tend to backfill with finer sediments.		types. With the removal of high order UXO clearance, any potential disturbance to seabed sediments would be further reduced from that assessed within the EIA. The Applicants would also note that as outlined in Volume 2, Annex 3.1: Fish and shellfish ecology technical report (APP-049), there are no suitable herring spawning habitats within the Transmission Assets boundary, and therefore the potential impacts are minimal. While there are limited areas of suitable sandeel habitats within the Transmission Assets boundary, as set out in Volume 2, Chapter 3: Fish and shellfish ecology section 3.11.2 (APP-048), the sandy sediments which characterise sandeel habitats are the sediment type that most readily recovers following seabed disturbance (e.g. from jack up footprints, UXO clearance or any other construction activities). As such, there will be no permanent effects on sandeel or herring spawning habitat as a result of these activities. See also the Applicants response to 092.1 in response to Appendix C3 to Natural England's Deadline 3 Submission (S_D4_2.6).
RI_D4	Natural England defers to CEFAS on survey data acquisition, data sources, assessment methodology and its conclusions in relation to herring and sandeel. Natural England advises the Applicant refer to CEFAS comments as advisors to the MMO on this matter.					
RI_D5	It is unclear whether all relevant pathways have been assessed and/or quantified. Where relevant, the calculations for temporary and/ or permanent habitat loss impacts need to be considered with regards to suitable habitat for sandeel and herring. Natural England advise that full consideration of the likely nature, extent, duration, and significance of impacts upon SPA supporting habitats is required to inform a robust assessment of the likely impacts upon designated ornithological features and in turn prey species.		The Applicants assessed temporary and long term habitat loss in Volume 2, Chapter 3: Fish and shellfish ecology (APP-048), and provided additional information on supporting habitats and prey species in response to Natural England's Relevant Representation (PDA-014, RR-1601, 1601.46).	In progress. The comment in RI_D2 is also applicable here.		The Applicants welcome the comment from Natural England that the response has resolved this issue. The Applicants have committed to update information in HRA Stage 2 Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment Part Three (APP-017) at Deadline 5.
RI_D6	Natural England largely agree with justification for in-combination assessment impacts for UXO and EMF but see comments D10 & D11 for further consideration.		The Applicants welcome this agreement. The Applicants' response to Natural England's Relevant Representation (PDA-018, RR-1601.D) provides further clarity on the outstanding points as set out above under RI_D3.	No change.		The Applicants would refer Natural England to the Applicants' response to RI_D3 and has nothing further to add.
RI_D7	Natural England do not agree with the statement that smelt have been shown					

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	to habituate to anthropogenic noise sources. There is little evidence to support this. The Applicant should provide more robust evidence to support this conclusion or remove the statement.					

7.7 Risk and Issues Log – Marine Mammals

Table 7-7: Responses to questions regarding Marine Mammals

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
Risk and Issue Log Deadline 1 – Marine Mammals Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets Appendix E - Marine Mammals						
RI_E1	Natural England note that UXO clearance is included as a licenced activity in the DCO/marine licence (which includes high order clearance). This is a live issue for some projects in the consenting process (Mona OWF and Morgan OWF) and it is also applicable for the Transmission Assets. We strongly advise that a separate marine licence is sought for UXO clearance due to the lack of information available regarding the size, type and number etc of UXO that will require clearance and the over precaution that must be incorporated into the impact assessment at this stage. Without further information on what size of devices will proceed to clearance stage, the assessment (and associated mitigation protocols) must consider the worst-case scenario presented. Natural England advise that UXO clearance should be authorised under a standalone marine licence post consent and removed from the draft DCO.		The Applicants provided a detailed response on this subject previously, within RR-1601 1601.E.1 (PDA-019). The Applicants confirm that high order UXO clearance was removed from the draft DCO (including the DMLs) (REP1-008) at Deadline 1. Removal of high order UXO clearance from this DCO is reflected in the drafting of the deemed marine licences in Schedules 14 & 15, Condition 20(1)(b) in the draft DCO (REP2-004). The Commitments Register (see CoT64) (REP2-010) and Outline MMMP (REP2-026) were also updated at Deadline 2 to reflect these changes. The MMMPs will require implementation of a mitigation hierarchy for UXO clearance, prioritising avoidance of UXOs and the use of low order techniques. However, avoidance may not always be possible, depending on the circumstances surrounding each UXO, in which case the Applicants consider it necessary for low order UXO to be authorised under each of the offshore DMLs at Schedules 14 and 15 of the draft DCO (REP2-004). The updated version of the Marine Mammal Chapter (APP-050) will be submitted into Examination at Deadline 6. Please note, the Applicants maintain that the assessment of potential effects of high order UXO clearance should remain within the Marine Mammal Chapter (APP-050) to support a marine licence application, should the need arise to apply for high order UXO clearance through a separate marine licence.	Natural England welcomes the removal of high order UXO detonations from the DCO and the outline MMMP submitted at D2 [REP2-027]. However Natural England maintains its position that UXO detonation should be subject to a separate marine licence post consent, regardless of whether the removal is low or high order.		The Applicants note the comment and the position taken by Natural England on this point; however it is the Applicants' position that it is appropriate and justified to include UXO clearance (limited to low order clearance) activities within the draft DCO (REP3-009). The Applicants have included all necessary activities for the construction and operation and maintenance of the Transmission Assets in the application for development consent, to ensure a comprehensive application, and all such activities have been subject to a robust assessment process. This includes UXO clearance activities, with suitable mitigation secured (Outline Marine Mammal Mitigation Protocol (REP2-026) and a commitment to not clearing UXO within the Liverpool Bay SPA between Nov – Mar (inclusive) as set out under CoT130 in Commitments Register (REP3-013)). Including only low order UXO clearance activities within the draft DCO, and appropriate controls under Condition 20 of Schedules 14 and 15 (REP3-009) is intended to remove the need to apply for and obtain a further licence post-consent and prior to construction, assisting with the expeditious delivery of the Transmission Assets project, contributing to UK Government targets for Net Zero. This is consistent with the approach taken for the Morgan Generation project and the recently consented Mona Offshore Wind Project.
RI_E2	Natural England have outstanding concerns on the assessment methodology. We see the issues as follows: • Dual effect categories in the assessment matrix where in certain cases non-significant and significant effects can result from the same combination of magnitude and sensitivity. It is generally		The Applicants provided a detailed response on this subject previously, within RR-1601 1601.E.2 (PDA-019).	No change.		The Applicants believe that a robust response was provided within RR-1601 1601.E.2 (PDA-019) and request that further information on outstanding concerns is provided. With reference to Natural England's Relevant Representation (RR) on dual effect categories, the Applicants confirm that where a magnitude of impact and sensitivity of receptor result in the potential for two

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	accepted that the assessment should follow the precautionary principle thus further justification is needed when lower effect categories are chosen. Or, ideally, dual categories in the matrix should be avoided. • Terminology used to base the conclusions of the assessment is not defined thus there is uncertainty as to what spatial or temporal scale terms such 'short term', 'medium term', long term', "temporary", "small scale", "regional', 'highly localised' mean. Natural England advises the assessment methodology be revised and the assessment updated accordingly.					different conclusions of significance (e.g. Minor or Moderate) (as set out in Table 4.16 of Volume 2 Chapter 4: Marine mammals (APP-050)), justification has been provided for the conclusion of significance that has been reached. Firstly, the Applicants highlight that for the impacts assessed in Volume 2 Chapter 4: Marine mammals (APP-050), there is no scenario identified where the dual effect category could have resulted in either a non-significant or significant effect; where a dual effect category did occur the magnitude of impact and sensitivity of receptor combinations either resulted in two non-significant categories (e.g. Negligible or Minor) or two significant categories (Moderate or Major). The approach to dual effect categories is detailed in Volume 2 Chapter 4: Marine mammals (APP-050), in cases where a dual significance of effect potential occurs from the same combination of magnitude and sensitivity, the final significance is based upon the topic expert's professional judgement as to which outcome delineates the most likely effect, with a clear explanation as to why this is the case (see paragraph 4.10.4.2 of Volume 2 Chapter 4: Marine mammals (APP-050)). The final conclusion of significance is based upon a realistic worst-case scenario for each impact and therefore the precaution is inherent in the approach to the assessment. Two examples have been set out below: Example 1 (two non-significant categories): for all species, for the impact of behavioural disturbance from elevated underwater sound during UXO clearance, the magnitude of the impact was deemed to be low, and the sensitivity of the receptor was considered to be low (as set out in paragraph 4.11.2.55 of Volume 2, Chapter 4: Marine mammals (APP-050)). Volume 2, Chapter 4: Marine mammals (APP-050) set out that there is not anticipated to be any effect on the international value of these species. The conclusion of significance, in line with the approach set out by the matrix, could have been concluded to be either negligible or minor adverse (a dual effect category), however a precautionary conclusion of minor adverse was adopted due to evidence of potential for an effect. Therefore, in response to NE's submission, the evidence supported the selection of the more precautionary (the higher effect) of the two significance categories. Example 2 (two significant categories): for the impact of injury from elevated underwater sound during UXO clearance, for Very High Frequency (VHF) cetaceans (e.g. harbour porpoise), the magnitude of the impact was deemed to be medium for harbour porpoise and the sensitivity of the receptor was considered to be high, and there was considered to be no change to the international value of the species assessed (as set out in paragraph 4.11.2.53 of Volume 2 Chapter 4: Marine mammals (APP-050)). The conclusion of significance, in

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						line with the approach set out by the matrix, could have been concluded to be either moderate adverse or major adverse (both significant in EIA terms) (a dual effect category), however a conclusion of moderate adverse was adopted, on the basis that "Whilst there may be some residual effect with a small number of animals potentially exposed to sound levels that could elicit PTS, based on expert judgement it is considered that this would not manifest to population level effects." Therefore, in response to Natural England's submission, the evidence supported the selection of the lower effect category, and justification was provided on why the more precautionary of the two significance categories was not selected. In response to Natural England's submission that "ideally, dual categories in the matrix should be avoided", the matrix approach is a recognised and accepted approach for EIA (Volume 1, Chapter 5: Environmental Assessment Methodology (APP-034) and in Volume 2 Chapter 4: Marine mammals (APP-050)). This matrix approach is used, together with professional judgement, to evaluate the significance of effect. The flexibility in the matrix table, including the dual effect options, is necessary to allow the approach to be tailored to each topic, whilst retaining consistency across the ES. The magnitude and sensitivity tables are tailored specifically to marine mammals, to underpin the assessment and provide quantitative metrics, where possible, that allow a robust conclusion of significance to be reached. With reference to Natural England's RR on assessment terminology, interspecific differences in life history make it difficult to define short, medium, and long term within the magnitude tables. However, definitions have been provided for long term, medium term and short within the Glossary of Volume 2, Chapter 4: Marine mammals (APP-050). The phrase very short term was also used in relation to UXO clearance only, given that the duration of impact (elevated sound) for each UXO clearance occurs over a matter of seconds. In addition, the temporal scale of the impact is described in the text under each magnitude section and relates to the lifespan of a particular species. Similarly, spatial scale is also referred to in more detail within the text in the magnitude section. Where possible a quantitative value is given (i.e. a range of effect in metres or kilometres) otherwise a qualitative description applies (e.g. 'localised to within the close vicinity of the respective projects' or collision risk which occurs 'within close vicinity' to the vessel). A measure of the temporary nature of effects is also described here (e.g. UXO clearance events result in a very short duration of sound emission (seconds)). Therefore, the Applicants consider that the conclusions of magnitude and significance, as presented within Volume 2, Chapter 4: Marine mammals (APP-050) are appropriate and proportionate. Finally, the Applicants

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
						highlight that the assessment of significance for PTS was based on the MDS of high order UXO clearance, however the Applicants have committed to the use of low order clearance only. Please see responses to RR-1601.37 regarding the removal of high order UXO clearance from the draft DCO (including DMLs) (AS-004) and RR-1601.E.1 regarding the updates to the Outline MMMP to focus on low order UXO clearance (APP-223).
RI_E3	The effective range of ADDs for harbour porpoises is 7.5 km approximately (JNCC 2022). The Applicant needs to outline how they plan to mitigate the rest of the estimated injury zone up to 15.37 km for high order UXO clearance activities. It is not clear what other measures the Applicant will commit to in order to mitigate for the full injury zone. The Applicant should provide further information on mitigation options for the entire harbour porpoise injury zone from high order UXO clearance for the alone and cumulative effect assessment (CEA).		An updated version of the Outline MMMP (REP2-026) reflecting removal of high order UXO from the DCO was submitted into Examination at Deadline 2. The updated version of the Marine Mammal Chapter (APP-050) will be submitted into Examination at Deadline 6. Please note, the Applicants maintain that the assessment of potential effects of high order UXO clearance should remain within the Marine Mammals ES Chapter (APP-050) to support a marine licence application, should the need arise to apply for high order UXO clearance through a separate marine licence.	In progress. Our comment at Deadline 2 also applies here.		The Applicants confirm that they intend to update the Volume 2, Chapter 4: Marine Mammals Chapter (APP-050) to align with the changes related to the impact of Injury and disturbance from elevated underwater sound during UXO clearance made at Deadline 6 for the Morgan Offshore Wind Farm: Generation Assets, as requested by Natural England at Deadline 2. An updated Marine Mammals Chapter will be submitted at Deadline 5.
RI_E4	Natural England does not support use of scare charges for UXO clearance, and we advise that this measure is not considered in the final Marine Mammal Mitigation Protocol (MMMP). Remove the use of scare charges for UXO clearance from the final MMMP.		An updated version of the Outline MMMP (REP2-026) removing mitigation for high order UXO detonation, including the use of scare charges as a mitigation option for high order detonation was submitted into Examination at Deadline 2. The updated version of the Marine Mammals ES Chapter (APP-050) will be submitted into Examination at Deadline 6. Please note, the Applicants maintain that the assessment of potential effects of high order UXO clearance should remain within the Marine Mammals ES Chapter (APP-050) to support a marine licence application, should the need arise to apply for high order UXO clearance through a separate marine licence.	Natural England welcomes the removal of scare charges/soft start charges from the updated MMMP for UXO clearance [REP2-027]. We advise that the Applicant should submit an updated Marine Mammal Chapter into Examination to reflect that soft start charges have been removed. Provided that these updated documents are submitted into examination, we believe this issue will be readily resolved.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_E3. These changes include the removal of references to deterrence using 'soft start' scare charges. An updated Marine Mammals Chapter will be submitted at Deadline 5. The Applicants welcome Natural England's confirmation that this issue will be readily resolved.
RI_E5	Standard industry measures (such as Marine Mammal Observers (MMOs), Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM) and Acoustic Deterrent Devices (ADDs)) are intended to minimise the risk of injury, thus they cannot be used as a justification to conclude that there will be no significant disturbance of the species. Mitigation measures aimed to reduce disturbance should be considered instead		The Applicants provided a detailed response on this subject previously, within RR-1601 1601.E.5 (PDA-019). Additionally, see the Applicants responses to RI_E3 above.	In progress. Our comment at Deadline 2 also applies here.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_E3.

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	of relying on measures for reducing the risk of injury. This needs to be revised throughout the assessment.					
RI_E6	Natural England has outstanding concerns regarding the Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA). Natural England does not agree with the significance of effect for PTS during UXO clearance in the cumulative effects assessment, particularly for harbour porpoise and does not agree with the justification for the conclusions made. Assess population-level consequences of disturbance during the cumulative effects assessment for all scenarios and produce an appropriate mitigation plan if significant effects are predicted. Given the cumulative number of vessels across all projects as well as large disturbance ranges, Natural England does not agree with the assigned magnitude score 'low' for disturbance from elevated underwater sound due to vessel use and other (non-piling) sound producing activities. The assessment provides very limited consideration of the potential significant increase of number of vessels and vessel movements for each project. Revise the CEA for disturbance from elevated underwater sound due to vessel use and other (non-piling) sound producing activities with an increased level of magnitude and commit to implementing the Vessel Traffic Management Plan.		The Applicants provided a detailed response on this subject previously, within RR-1601 1601.E.6 (PDA-019). Additionally, see the Applicants responses to RI_E3 above.	In progress. Our comment at Deadline 2 also applies here.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_E3.
RI_E7	The Maximum Design Scenario (MDS) for Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) clearance differs between the documents. Natural England advise that details relating to UXO clearance MDS should be updated for consistency across all chapters to ensure the Worst Case Scenario (WCS) is appropriately discussed and assessed.					
RI_E8	The MDS for Injury and disturbance to marine mammals from elevated underwater sound due to vessel use and other sound-producing activities in the Marine Mammals chapter [APP-050] differs from the MDS outlined in Chapter 7 Shipping and Navigation [APP-056]. Natural England advise that the MDS					

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	should be correctly reported and assessed in all relevant chapters and where chapters make reference to each other ensure all details, e.g. MDS, are consistent.					
RI_E9	Table 4.7 [APP-050] includes all correct protected areas and features. However, the referenced figure 4.1 'SACs and MNRs, designated for the protection of marine mammals within the regional study area' has not been included in Volume 2, Figures [APP-064]. The figure labelled 4.1 in [APP-064] is the marine mammal study area and relevant species MUs not the designated sites. Some figures in accompanying volumes do not have a reference number on the figure but are referenced in the ES. Ensure all figures are appropriately included, labelled, referenced and identifiable from the reference in ES.					
RI_E10	Natural England notes the inclusion of harbour seals in the assessment without a population estimate for the Isle of Man population. Natural England acknowledges the lack of data currently available in the literature to provide an estimate for the Isle of Man.					
RI_E11	Natural England advises that the reference population for grey seal should consider both the GSRP population estimate and the NW MU estimate. Natural England advise that both should be considered. Revise assessment so that it is undertaken against the NW MU grey seal population alone as the reference population, in addition to the assessment completed against the GSRP population.					
RI_E12	Natural England does not agree with the approach of using a 100km buffer region for grey seal in order to determine connectivity with the Transmission Assets based upon average foraging ranges for the species. maximum foraging distances from Carter et al., 2022 should be used to determine the connectivity from an identified haul out site and the project area. Natural England previously raised this issue during the PEIR stage and it has					

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	not been addressed. We do not now anticipate any material changes would be made to the baseline.					
RI_E13	Natural England acknowledges the inclusion in the ES of survey data and other data/ up to date references as requested, e.g. SCANS IV and two years of survey data at Morecambe Offshore Windfarm: Generation Assets and the inclusion of other key references Marine Mammal Welsh Atlas (2023), IAMMWG (2022) and SCOS 2022.					
RI_E14	The significance of auditory injury to harbour porpoise from UXO detonation should be amended to major, in line with the most significant option in the dual matrix category. Update the conclusions for auditory injury for harbour porpoise in the ES.		The Applicants provided a detailed response on this subject previously, within RR-1601 1601.E.19 (PDA-019). Additionally, see the Applicants responses to RI_E3 above.	In progress. Our comment at Deadline 2 also applies here.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_E3.
RI_E15	Inconsistency in the approach when assigning the sensitivity score for effects on marine mammals due to changes in prey availability. Minke whale has been assigned a sensitivity of medium, however harbour seal and harbour porpoise have both been assigned a sensitivity of low. Due to the vulnerability of harbour porpoise and harbour seal to changes in prey availability, their assigned sensitivity score should be medium in the assessment.					
RI_E16	Natural England disagrees that a period of several months can be considered "short term". However, in paragraph 4.11.6.30 the same description of works is described as 'medium term'. Define the terms to describe both temporal and spatial impacts and apply them consistently across the assessment.					
RI_E17	Natural England notes that the predicted disturbance ranges for sub-bottom profilers (SBPs) and vibro-coring are 17.3km and 10.6km respectively. However, no mitigation measures have been discussed for these large disturbance ranges. Natural England acknowledges that there are currently no other mitigation options available for SBP surveys beside those outlines in the JNCC guidelines for					

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	minimising the risk of injury to marine mammals from geophysical surveys (JNCC, 2017). Thus, there is a need for monitoring to fill the knowledge gap on the impact of SBP surveys on harbour porpoises. We therefore advise that monitoring should be considered with the aim to collect data before, during and after SBP surveys to examine changes in the baseline. Inclusion of this monitoring in the IPMP would resolve this issue.					
RI_E18	The maximum disturbance ranges predicted for SBP is up to 17.3 km and is described as 'mild disturbance', however in 4.11.6.29 it states that for 'impulsive sound sources there is an understanding of the difference between strong and mild disturbance, whereas for non-impulsive (continuous) sound sources (MBES, SSS, SBES, SBP (chirp/pinger) and vibro-coring), there is only a single available threshold (120 dB re 1 µPa (SPLrms)), which is classed as the distance beyond which no animals would be disturbed.' This statement contradicts the conclusion of mild disturbance from SBP sound source. Define the terms correctly for impulsive and non-impulsive sound sources and apply them consistently across the assessment.					
RI_E19	Given the cumulative number of vessels across all projects as well as large disturbance ranges, Natural England does not agree with the assigned magnitude score of 'low' for disturbance from elevated underwater sound due to vessel use and other (non-piling) sound producing activities. Revise the CEA for disturbance from elevated underwater sound due to vessel use and other (non-piling) sound producing activities. Ensure the Applicant commits to implementing their Vessel Traffic Management Plan.					
RI_E20	Natural England acknowledge the MMOs advice to the Applicant to commit to using Noise Abatement Systems (NAS) as mitigation during construction. Natural England notes CoT64 where the Applicants has committed to developing and implementing a detailed MMMP					

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	which will include the use of low order techniques as the primary mitigation where possible. The detailed MMMP should consider guidelines for minimising the risk of injury to marine mammals from UXO (JNCC, 2025). Natural England advises the Applicant should continue to prioritise other measures, such as avoidance, relocation and low-order clearance methods such as deflagration over high order clearance and to consider and apply new guidelines for minimising the risk of injury to marine mammals from UXO. These other measures should all be included in the final MMMP.					
RI_E21	Natural England defers to CEFAS as the underwater sound specialists to comment on the Underwater Sound Technical Report.					
RI_E22	Please note that it is Natural England's remit to provide advice on the assessment in so much as it relates to SACs in English waters. We defer to the relevant SNCBs on the appropriate approach for assessing SACs outside English waters.					
RI_E23	Natural England notes that the Applicant is more likely to carry out sequential UXO clearance, however the assessment states that 'A spatial MDS would occur where UXO clearance activities coincide at all three projects simultaneously'. There remains potential for UXO clearance activities to coincide at all 3 projects simultaneously, therefore there could be a significant impact on marine mammals that could manifest to population level effects based on the PTS figures for high order UXO clearance. Natural England advise the Applicant to produce an appropriate mitigation plan should this scenario occur.		The Applicants provided a detailed response on this subject previously, within RR-1601 1601.E.35 (PDA-019). Please also see the Applicants response above to RI_E1 on the removal of high order UXO clearance from the draft DCO at Deadline 1 (REP1-008) and updated Outline MMMP submitted at Deadline 2 (REP2-026).	In progress. Our comment at Deadline 2 also applies here.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_E3.
RI_E24	We note that the mitigation measures to minimise disturbance to marine mammals included within the Offshore EMP are only relevant to the transiting vessels. Consider appropriate measure for all other (non-piling) sound producing activities, not just transiting vessels.					

7.8 Risk and Issues Log – Offshore Ornithology

Table 7-8: Responses to questions regarding Offshore Ornithology

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
Risk and Issues Log Deadline 1 – Offshore Ornithology Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets Appendix F - Offshore Ornithology						
RI_F1	The Applicant should complete a quantified cumulative assessment of impacts on species sensitive to disturbance and displacement, including mortality figures for each project included in the assessment, and provide clarity on the parameters used to produce those figures. The result should comprise a total abundance of birds that could be affected and a range of final mortality estimates based on a range of possible displacement and mortality rates, as per Natural England best practice guidance.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_F3	In progress. The Applicant has now committed to a full seasonal restriction on all construction activity and UXO clearance from November to March (inclusive) within the original Liverpool Bay SPA plus a 2km buffer. This addresses NE's concerns and AEoI can now be ruled out for the red-throated diver and common scoter features of the SPA. We do not anticipate significant numbers of these species outside the original SPA boundary. This comment relates to EIA scale assessments, therefore once suitable wording is included in the ES chapter this matter can be resolved.		The Applicants confirm that the ES chapter (Volume 2, Chapter 5: Offshore Ornithology (APP-053)) will be updated and submitted at Deadline 5. Additionally, the Applicants highlight that a new commitment has been made at Deadline 4 stating that "*The Applicants will not plan routine O&M activities in the original Liverpool Bay SPA (as designated in 2010), including a 2 km buffer between November and March (inclusive) unless in urgent circumstances.*" (see CoT135 in the updated Commitments Register (F1.5.3/F05)).
RI_F2	Natural England recommend that an assessment of the long-term loss of seabed habitat that potentially supports prey species for the ornithological features of Liverpool Bay SPA is included in the Information to Support Appropriate Assessment. This should be based on an assessment of the area of suitable spawning and other supporting habitat for prey species that could be lost due to the construction of the cable corridor, with consideration of i) diver and in particular scoter densities along those parts of the cable route where rock protection might be needed and ii) the presence of key species/habitats that fall within that area.		Please see the Applicants' response to RR-1601.49 in PDA-014.	In progress. Natural England are satisfied with the justification in the Applicant's response to NE's Relevant Representations [PDA-014], they explained that the total area of potential habitat loss is considered small enough to rule out this impact pathway. Natural England are satisfied that the additional information on the predicted habitat loss in PDA-014 would allow adverse effects on the Liverpool Bay SPA to be ruled out. To fully resolve the issue, we recommend that this information is used to update the relevant parts of the application, in particular the Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment.		The Applicants confirm that the ES chapter (Volume 2, Chapter 5: Offshore Ornithology (APP-053) and HRA Stage 2 Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment Part Three (APP-017) will be updated and submitted at Deadline 5.
RI_F3	Natural England do not agree with the conclusion that adverse effect on site integrity (AEoI) for the red-throated diver and common scoter features of Liverpool Bay SPA can be ruled out due to the displacement and disturbance impacts of the Project alone during the construction phase. Natural England highlights that the conservation advice for these features include targets to maintain the distribution of the feature and the extent, distribution and		Please see the Applicants' response to comment NE12 on "Annex 3.3 to Applicants' Response to WRs: Response to Natural England's Risk and Issues Log – Rev F01 (REP2-034)" where the Applicants have committed to seasonal restrictions within the Liverpool Bay SPA. This includes a timing restriction on all offshore export cable installation activities between November and March (inclusive) within the original boundary of the Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA (as designated in 2010) and including a 2 km buffer, unless otherwise agreed with the MMO, in	Resolved. The Applicant has now committed to a restriction on all construction activity and UXO clearance from November to March (inclusive) within the original Liverpool Bay SPA boundary plus a 2km buffer [REP2-025]. This addresses Natural England's concerns and AEoI can now be ruled out for the red-throated diver and common scoter features of the SPA.		The Applicants welcome the resolution of this issue at Deadline 3.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	availability of supporting habitat, preventing deterioration from current levels, not just population abundance. The Project's potential to cause AEoI can be avoided by the Applicant committing to a full restriction on all offshore construction and pre-construction (UXO clearance) activity with the potential to cause disturbance within the SPA and a 2km buffer around it during the wintering months of November to March (inclusive).		consultation with Natural England, to remove the potential for AEoI. In addition, the Applicants have committed to a seasonal restriction for UXO clearance, whereby no clearance of UXO will be undertaken within the Liverpool Bay SPA/Bae Lerpwl SPA between November and March (inclusive) (see the 'Measures to minimise disturbance to marine mammals and rafting birds from vessels' (REP2-025) and Commitment Register (REP2-010) and draft DCO (REP2-004) submitted at Deadline 2.			
RI_F4	Natural England are unable to reach a conclusion regarding the Project's impacts during the operations and maintenance (O&M) phase, either alone or in-combination, as the maximum design scenario (MDS) is set out on an annual basis. Alongside the annual MDS, the Applicant should set out the MDS for the key wintering months of November to March (inclusive), particularly for any activities which have the potential to cause disturbance to sensitive ornithological features within Liverpool Bay SPA and consider the need for a seasonal restriction for O&M activities.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_F3	No change. The Applicant have not provided clarity on how many days of vessel movement would be expected in the winter during O&M activities. We advise the Applicant consider a commitment to not carry out any routine maintenance in the winter unless in urgent circumstances (we are aware this is already an unlikely scenario as weather conditions are usually prohibitive).		The Applicants have included the suggested commitment to the Commitments Register (F1.5.3/F05) at Deadline 4 stating that "*The Applicants will not plan routine O&M activities in the original Liverpool Bay SPA (as designated in 2010), including a 2 km buffer between November and March (inclusive) unless in urgent circumstances." (*see CoT135*)* Additionally, the Applicants highlight that the following measures have already been included in the Measures to Minimise Disturbance to Marine Mammals and Rafting Birds from vessels at Deadline 2 (REP2-025) and applied, wherever possible, during transit through Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA and out to 2 km from the Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA boundary to and from port and works areas, in line with Natural England's Best Practice Protocol for Vessels in Red Throated Diver SPAs guidance on selecting routes that avoid known aggregations of birds: • maintaining direct transit routes (to minimise transit distances through areas used by divers); and • avoidance of over-revving of engines (to minimise noise disturbance).
RI_F5	Natural England note that the Applicant has calculated a bespoke regional population for red-throated diver based on the fact that the BDMPS population from Furness (2015), which is generally used as the standard reference for EIA population scales, is smaller than the most recent population estimate for Liverpool Bay alone (HiDef, 2023). The Applicant should calculate a regional population based only on populations that sit within the original BDMPS region					

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	and use this for assessing red-throated diver impacts.					
RI_F6	We note that the wintering period has been identified as covering November-February inclusive. Natural England considers the key sensitive period for red-throated diver to extend until the end of March. Seasonal restrictions on construction activity to avoid impacts on wintering birds should cover the period from the start of November to the end of March.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_F3	Our response to RI_F3 is also applicable here.		The Applicants welcome the resolution of this issue at Deadline 3.
RI_F7	The Applicant should present a range of cumulative quantitative displacement impacts from other projects on red-throated diver and common scoter at an EIA scale in the Irish sea, both those exerting ongoing pressures during their operations and maintenance phase and those whose construction impacts will overlap with the Project, plus the predicted impacts from the Project in its construction stage.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_F3.	No change.		Due to the commitment to a seasonal restriction (during construction and operation & maintenance phases) the project will no longer contribute cumulative seasonal impacts and therefore cumulative assessments are no longer required for red-throated diver and common scoter. The Applicants would welcome confirmation from NE that this is agreed at Deadline 5.
RI_F8	Due to the sensitivity of key ornithological features of Liverpool Bay SPA during the wintering months of November to March (inclusive). Therefore the Applicant should include descriptions of the maximum design scenario for activities causing airborne sound, underwater sound or presence/movement of vessels and infrastructure within the wintering period for each phase of the Project, in addition to the annual descriptions.					
RI_F9	To fully consider the in-combination impacts on the distribution and the extent, distribution and availability of supporting habitat for the red-throated diver and common scoter features of Liverpool Bay SPA, the Applicant should present an assessment of the area and the proportion of the SPA that is subject to displacement and disturbance impacts due to the Project in-combination with other projects and include West of Duddon Sands OWF as its 10km buffer overlaps with the SPA.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_F3	Resolved. The Applicant has now committed to a restriction on all construction activity and UXO clearance from November to March (inclusive) within the original Liverpool Bay SPA boundary plus a 2km buffer [REP2-025]. This addresses Natural England's concerns and AEoI can now be ruled out for the red-throated diver and common scoter features of the SPA.		The Applicants welcome the decision to resolve this issue at Deadline 3.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
RI_F10	Natural England notes the Hynet North West Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) project has been screened out of the offshore ornithology assessment due to low data confidence. There is a high risk of spatial and temporal overlap of the construction of Hynet North West CCS and the Transmission Assets, therefore Natural England advise this project should be screened into the CEA for offshore ornithology and assessed as part of the Tier 2 projects. Further information should be sought from the Hynet project, specifically information on mitigation measures during construction.		The Hynet CCS project was identified as a Tier 2 project within the Application and categorised as a project with Low data confidence in relation to offshore ornithological receptors due to an absence of information pertaining to potential impacts from this project. An update to the Cumulative Screening matrix and location plan submitted at Deadline 1 (REP1-020) reclassified the Hynet CCS project as a Tier 1 project, and is considered as such for Offshore Ornithology receptors within the Review of the Cumulative Effects Assessment and In-Combination Assessment submitted at Deadline 2 (REP2-043). The species progressed to the cumulative assessment in Volume 2, Chapter 5: Offshore Ornithology (APP-053) were cormorant, common scoter, eider, red-breasted merganser, red-throated diver and scaup. The qualifying features progressed to the in-combination assessment in Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 2 Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment Part Three – Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar Site assessments (APP-017) were qualifying features of the Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA namely red-throated diver, cormorant, common scoter and red-breasted merganser. These species are present within the relevant ornithological study areas in the non-breeding season only. Therefore following the project's commitment to a seasonal restriction on all offshore export cable installation activities works between November and February March (inclusive) within the Liverpool Bay SPA/ Bae Lerpwl SPA (as designated in 2010), including a 2 km buffer (CoT111 of F1.5.3 Environmental Statement Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments Register (REP2-010)) during the non-breeding season, the Transmission Assets no longer contribute to a cumulative or in-combination impact on the qualifying features of the Liverpool Bay SPA and therefore cumulative and in-combination assessments for these receptors/features is no longer required.	Resolved. Natural England notes the inclusion of Hynet in [REP2-043]. In addition, the Applicant has now committed to a restriction on all construction activity and UXO clearance from November to March (inclusive) within the original Liverpool Bay SPA boundary plus a 2km buffer [REP2-025]. This addresses Natural England's concerns regarding the CEA.		The Applicants welcome the resolution of this issue at Deadline 3.

7.9 Risk and Issues Log – Onshore Ecology

Table 7-9: Responses to questions regarding Onshore Ecology

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
Risk and Issues Log Deadline 1 – Onshore Ecology Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets Appendix G - Onshore Ecology						
RI_G1	Natural England is unable to rule out significant impacts on sand dune SSSI features associated with Lytham St. Annes Dunes due to uncertainties around changes to the water table (both during construction and operation). We are also concerned about dewatering effects associated with pumping out water from the Transition Joint Bay (TJB) during construction, and the cable acting as a conduit altering water flow through the system. Similar concerns are also flagged for sand dune habitat (S41 priority habitat under the NERC Act 2006) at St. Annes Old Links Golf Course Biological Heritage Site (BHS) and Lytham Foreshore Dunes and Saltmarsh BHS. a) We advise that Impacts on dune slack vegetation (which is referable to the Annex I habitat H1290) needs to be more thoroughly assessed. b) Natural England advises the Applicant to consider the installation of dipwells (automatic dataloggers) to monitor the position of the water table pre- and post-construction and this commitment should be included as a part of the ongoing Monitoring Plan c) In addition, we advise that modelling is necessary to determine the position of the water table and potential fluctuations that may arise as part of the proposals over the lifetime of the project.		The Applicants are engaging with Natural England regarding their concerns about potential impacts on the sand dune features of the Lytham St Anne's Dunes SSSI. A meeting was held on 12 June 2025 to discuss the proposed scope and structure of the Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment. The Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment is informed by hydrogeological and ecological desk study information and ground investigation data presented in Volume 3, Chapter 1: Geology, hydrogeology and ground conditions (APP-068) and Volume 3 Annex 3.3: Phase 1 Habitat, National Vegetation Classification and Hedgerow (REP2-014). Feedback from the call was used to amend the Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment content where appropriate. The Applicants have submitted an Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment (S_D3_6) at Deadline 3. The Applicants note that the Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment is the initial stage in the hydrogeological risk assessment (HRA) process and will be used to agree the approach for the detailed HRA. This will secured within DCO Schedules 2A & 2B, Requirement 8 (Code of Construction Practice).	No change. Our response is provided in Appendix G3 section 1.1.This		The Applicants are engaging with Natural England regarding their concerns about potential impacts on the sand dune features of the Lytham St Anne's Dunes SSSI. The Applicants submitted an Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment (REP3-061) at Deadline 3. The Applicants anticipate comments from Natural England at Deadline 4.
RI_G2	Natural England advises that the limited project specific data collected makes it difficult to assess any potential changes in habitat/ species composition associated, for example, with a modified water table brought about by the dewatering and pumping of water during construction from the TJB. Natural England advises that surveys of St. Annes Old Links Golf Course BHS should be undertaken in June 2025 to fill in the evidence gaps to better assess potential changes to habitats and species from the potential dewatering of the site. Use of fine scale Lidar		The Applicants have provided a detailed response regarding St Annes Old Links Golf Course BHS previously within RR-1601 1601.53 (PDA-014). The Applicants are engaging with Natural England regarding the potential impacts of dewatering during the construction of the TJB. A meeting was held on 12 June to discuss the scope and structure of the Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment. The Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment considers the baseline site setting including the interaction of	No change. Our response to R1_G1 is also applicable here.		The Applicants undertook an updated NVC survey of the Lytham St. Annes Dunes SSSI in July 2025. The NVC survey report will be shared with Natural England as soon as it is available and will be submitted into the examination at Deadline 5. The Applicants are planning to undertake the remaining survey at St. Annes Old Links Golf Course BHS subject to landowner permission and include this is in the survey report submitted at Deadline 5.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	may help identify low lying areas which may be relict dune slacks.		the hydrogeology and ecological habitats. The Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment will include a description of the habitats at St Anne's Old Links Golf Course BHS. The Applicants will be undertaking an updated NVC survey in July 2025 (subject to landowner permission). The survey report will be submitted into the examination.			The Applicants anticipate that this survey information will address Natural England's comments on this matter once provided.
RI_G3	Further details (map and GPS locations) as to a) the location of the Transmission Joint Bays (TJBs) in Blackpool Airport, b) exit pits on the foreshore, c) the location of Compound 2 and d) the cable alignment under the sand dunes and cable depth is needed to help rule out impacts on sand dune SSSI features associated with Lytham St. Annes Dunes.		The Applicants have provided a detailed response regarding St Annes Old Links Golf Course BHS and dewatering in RR-1601 1601.G.3 (PDA-021). The Applicants have provided a summary of the Landfall Works within Annex 5.3 to the Applicants response to Hearing Action Points: ISH1 13, 14, 16, 17 (REP1-040).	No change. The additional information provided by the Applicant in "Annex 5.3 to the Applicants response to Hearing Action Points: ISH1 13, 14, 16, 17" [REP1-040] provides some further clarity (including additional maps) on the location of the Transmission Joint bays, exit pits on the beach and Construction Compound 2. However, the Annex notes that the final positioning will not be agreed until the detailed design post consent (para. 2.2.1.5). It is also noted that the final route around the care home i.e. whether the cables cross the dunes to the north, south or are spilt around the care home will also not be agreed until the detail design post consent. Until the final design (post consent), the exact location of the exit pits and cable route under the dunes will not be agreed and this information is required to help rule out impacts on SSSI features.		The land parcels in which the Transmission Joint Bays will be located are set out in Schedule 1 (Authorised Project) of the draft DCO, and shown in Sheet 3 of the Works Plans - Onshore and Intertidal (AS-016), Works No. 10A/10B. As detailed with the Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment (REP3-061), these are a sufficient distance away to avoid impacts to the Lytham St. Annes Dunes SSSI. Each working area for each exit pit on the beach and construction compound 2 will be at least 100m seaward of the Lytham St Annes sand dunes SSSI as secured in Schedule 2A & 2B, Requirement 8 of the dDCO (AS-004) (CoT44).
RI_G4	Natural England advises that further details on the Direct Pipe Trenchless Technique and evidence to support its feasibility is required to be able to fully assess the potential impacts to Lytham St. Annes Dunes SSSI. An outline contingency plan should be developed and the Worst Case Scenario (WCS) should be at least assessed in the assessment, i.e. cable installation failure when using Direct Pipe Trenchless Technique.		The Applicants have responded previously to this matter within the response to RR-1601.52 (PDA-014). The Applicants have provided further evidence to support the use of trenchless installation within RR-1601.B 1601.B.8 (PDA-016).	No change.		The Applicants note there is no change on this matter, and that there is no further information that can be submitted in respect of the trenchless crossing of the dunes other than that provided in previous responses (see RR-1601.52 within PDA-014).
RI_G5	The condition of Lytham St. Annes Dunes SSSI is currently assessed as Unfavourable Recovering (based on a 2014 Natural England assessment). To achieve Favourable condition of the dunes ongoing management of the Fylde Dunes (including Lytham St. Annes Dunes SSSI and Lytham Foreshore Dunes and Saltmarsh BHS as outlined in Skelcher (2024) has been agreed. Natural England advises that the Applicant should consider in the Outline Ecological Management Plan how the required management actions outlined in Skelcher will continue to take place during the duration of the project.		The Applicant has responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.5 and RR-1601 1601.G.33 (PDA-021).	"No change. As a route for solution to this issue Natural England advise the Applicant to include a commitment to ensure ongoing habitat management works within Lytham St. Annes Dune SSSI and Lytham Foreshore Dunes & saltmarsh will be able to continue unhindered during cable installation so to help achieve Favourable condition of these priority habitats. The required management actions are referenced in Skelcher (2024). NE expect the existing management works can continue as planned as the Applicant is suggesting there will be no above ground works within the sand dunes of Lytham St. Annes Dune SSSI or Lytham Foreshore Dunes & saltmarsh. In addition the new		The Applicants can confirm there will be no restriction as a result of the Transmission Assets to the ongoing management works at Lytham St. Annes Dune SSSI and Lytham Foreshore Dunes & saltmarsh. The Applicants will discuss how best to secure this with Natural England and provide an update at Deadline 5.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
				CoT110 and CoT129 restricting works on Lytham St Annes beach (between November and March (inclusive)) will mean most habitat management will not coincide with cable installation."		
RI_G6	From the information provided Natural England does not consider there to be reasonable justification for the lack of Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey effort to date. Natural England advises (a) the Applicant needs to undertake a detailed ALC and soil survey of the agricultural land across the full Study Area to inform the application. And (b) the commitment to restore land needs to be secured in the DCO to not only reinstate the land but to ensure the site will be restored at a minimum to the same ALC grade as before construction, to ensure that land quality will not be negatively affected.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.13 (PDA-021) and in within the Applicants' response to Hearing Action Points due at Deadline 1 (REP1-037). The Applicants stand by their position and maintain that further survey is not required. The Applicants note that Natural England have stated within their Deadline 2 Cover Letter (REP2-062) that they are reviewing this document and will be providing an update to the Risk and Issue Log at Deadline 3.	No change. Our response is provided in Appendix G3 section 1.2.		The Applicants have responded to Natural England's response in REP3-093.3 (S_D4_2.6) as well as in NE16 above.
RI_G7	Natural England utilises the England Peat Status Greenhouse Gas and Carbon Storage which identifies that part of the cable route is situated on deep peat. At this stage there is not enough information for Natural England to advise if the proposal will have direct or indirect impacts on deep peat. Natural England do not support the principle of developing on restorable peat. Natural England advises that further evidence and survey data is required. Peat surveys should be carried out in line with the IUCN peatland programme field protocol. A Peat Management Plan will be required for any buried deep peat around the cabling route, even if it is remaining in situ.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.7 (PDA-021).	No change. Our response is provided in Appendix G3 section 1.3.		The Applicants have submitted a Peat Technical Note (S_D4_15) at Deadline 4 that provides Natural England with further information on the assessment of impacts to deep peat. The note provides a collation of the information on peat deposits and peaty soils within the Transmission Assets ES and the findings of both the desk top and survey work undertaken. In addition, it provides a summary of the documents where references to peat are made along with how the responses from Natural England's D3 submissions have been considered and addressed (where appropriate). In addition, further survey work will be undertaken pre-construction and the avoidance/mitigation measures set out in the outline soils management plan (J1.7/F02) will be applied which is a proportionate and appropriate way to manage any peat encountered.
RI_G8	Natural England advises as per our advice on other joint DCO applications such as the East Anglia offshore windfarms and most recently for Dudgeon and Sheringham Extension Projects that a commitment is made, that whichever project is constructed first installs the onshore cable ducts for both projects to minimise the environmental impacts and the working corridors if construction overlaps. We advise full consideration of all mitigation measures are considered as part of the consenting process.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.8 (PDA-021) As outlined in paragraph 8.4.1.1 of Annex 5.2 to the Applicants response to Hearing Action Points: ISH1 6, 8, 9, 19, 26 & 28 (REP1-039), the coordination of other projects was a commercial strategy from the outset with a common point of company control (and therefore decision-making may facilitate different options with regards to funding and facilitation of shared infrastructure (including for example shared haul roads and the potential for one project installing ducts for another project within overlapping cable corridors), none of	No change.		The Applicants have no additional comment to make further to previous responses within RR-1601 1601.G.8 (PDA-021) and Annex 5.2 to the Applicants response to Hearing Action Points: ISH1 6, 8, 9, 19, 26 & 28 (REP1-039).

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
			those projects have been forced to wait for the second project to come forwards and only construct concurrently.			
RI_G9	To better understand the potential impacts at dune structure and function, Natural England queries the minimum required distance between the 6 proposed cables in order to minimise the effect of heat transfer. Where the cable crosses under Lytham St. Annes Dunes SSSI and St. Annes Old Links Golf Course BHS the Order Limit has been minimised (which is welcomed), but using the current MDS this would mean the route is constrained at its narrowest point to 260m to the north and 220m to the south. Depending on the required distance between the cables this could result in the cables underlying a significant proportion of the SSSI dunes and relict dunes. Natural England advises that clarity is needed regarding the minimum distance between cables. This ideally would be illustrated showing the cable alignment within the Order Limits and the distance between the cables given in metres.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.9 (PDA-021).	No change. The additional information provided in ""Annex 5.3 to the Applicants response to Hearing Action Points: ISH1 13, 14, 16, 17"" [REP1-040] does not provide further clarity - e.g. para 2.2.1.5 notes that the final positioning of the exit pits and the final routing around the care home i.e. whether the cables cross the dunes to the north, south or are spilt around the care home will not be agreed until the detail design post consent. Therefore it is currently unclear how close the cables are to each other. Para 3.15.2.8 of the [REP2-009] Project Description notes ""Once installed, the electrical cables must be suitably spaced out in order to minimise the mutual heating effect of one cable circuit on another, and to allow for heat dissipation"".		The Applicants submitted an Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment (REP3-061) at Deadline 3. This includes the assessment of the impact on groundwater temperature through operational cable heating. It was concluded that the initial risk rating is low risk which would be reduced to very low risk if secondary mitigation options were implemented. Noting, that the implementation of secondary mitigation options if required will be determined at detailed design stage and detailed within the Detailed Hydrogeological Risk Assessments secured by requirement 8(2)(o) of Schedules 2A and 2B of the draft DCO [REP 3 – 009]. The Applicants anticipate comments from Natural England at Deadline 4.
RI_G10	Natural England advises that the Applicant clarify what temperatures may extend to the surface and across the dune structure when the cable is operational and assess and provide evidence on any possible impact on sand dune vegetation in terms of affecting water availability and mimicking drought (especially with increased issues of summer drought associated with climate change).		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.10 (PDA-021).	No change. This follows on from point RI_G9 above. Table 3.19 of the Project Description [REP2-009] provides a typical HDD cable burial depth of 15m. In order to progress this issue we require the Applicant to give an indication of likely heat transfer from the cable to the dunes and how this might impact sand dune vegetation (affecting water availability and mimicking drought).		The Applicants submitted an Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment (REP3-061) at Deadline 3. This includes the assessment of the impact on groundwater temperature through operational cable heating. It was concluded that the initial risk rating is low risk which would be reduced to very low risk if secondary mitigation options were implemented. Noting, that the implementation of secondary mitigation options if required will be determined at detailed design stage and detailed within the Detailed Hydrogeological Risk Assessments secured by requirement 8(2)(o) of Schedules 2A and 2B of the draft DCO [REP 3 – 009].. The Applicants anticipate comments from Natural England at Deadline 4.
RI_G11	Natural England advises that the ES should present the detailed and semi-detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey information. This should include a breakdown of the ALC grades (area, %) in relation to the application site boundary and include ALC and soil data for the cable route and areas of permanent infrastructure and habitat enhancement. A breakdown of the proposed site into disturbed and undisturbed land		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.13 (PDA-021) and in within the Applicants' response to Hearing Action Points due at Deadline 1 (REP1-037). The Applicants stand by their position and maintain that further survey is not required. The Applicants note that Natural England have stated within their Deadline 2 Cover Letter (REP2-062) that they are reviewing this	No change. Our response is provided in Appendix G3 section 1.4.		The Applicants have responded to Natural England's response in REP3-093.4 (S_D4_2.6).

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	categories should also be included, split by ALC grade, to help illustrate the potential for impact on agricultural land grade.		document and will be providing an update to the Risk and Issue Log at Deadline 3.			
RI_G12	Natural England notes the reference to topsoil removal, back filling of topsoil level and replacement of topsoil, but no proposed timeline of activities included. As part of an Outline Soil management Plan [APP-200] Natural England advises that further information on the timeline of proposed soil handling is provided and mitigation measures to minimise the impacts secured.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.14 (PDA-021).	No change. Our response is provided in Appendix G3 section 1.5.		The Applicants have responded to Natural England's response in REP3-093.6 (S_D4_2.6).
RI_G13	Natural England notes that following installation of ducts and backfilling of trenches the cables will be pulled through the ducts from joint bays. Natural England advises that the depth of the cabling laying be secured in a named plan and on the face of the DCO/dML. This depth is expected to be consistent with the industry standard of 0.9m depth.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.15 (PDA-021).	No change.		The Applicants have no additional comment to make further to previous response within RR-1601 1601.G.15 (PDA-021). In addition, in response to CAH2, the Applicants have produced a note to confirm whether minimum cable burial depth can be secured within the outline management documents (CAH2.8).
RI_G14	Further information on the timings of survey observations, quadrat locations and how wetness of dune slacks was calculated should be provided to better understand the robustness of the survey data. This should include date of NVC surveys (2016 or 2024), map showing quadrant locations and a quadrant data table		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.19 (PDA-021). ES Volume 3 Annex 3.3: Phase 1 Habitat, National Vegetation Classification and Hedgerow (REP2-014) has been updated to include a figure showing the NVC quadrat locations.	In progress. [REP2-014] Volume 3, Annex 3.3: Phase 1 habitat, national vegetation classification and hedgerow survey technical report has been updated to provide a map showing locations of each of the NVC survey sites based on the X, Y coordinates (Figure 1.1). In addition, Figure 1.3 shows the quadrat locations extracted from the Skelcher (2016) report. In order to resolve this issue it would be appropriate to reference the Skelcher (2016) report on Figure 1.3 to avoid confusion of when and by whom the quadrats where undertaken. Similarly, in Appendix B of [REP2-014] - the survey dates of both the woodland quadrats and in Appendix C sand dune quadrats should be given. It is presumed that the quadrat data in Appendix C is also taken from Skelcher 2016, however this is also unclear and is not specified.		The Applicants can confirm that the quadrats shown on Figure 1.3 and the quadrat data presented in Appendix C relate to the NVC ground-truthing survey undertaken in August 2024. Further to this, the Applicants have undertaken an updated NVC survey of the SSSI dunes in August 2025 (completed by a FISC level 6 botanical surveyor) and this report, which will include an updated NVC habitat map of the dunes, will be submitted at Deadline 5. s. The woodland NVC surveys were undertaken in June 2023.
RI_G15	Natural England notes that the maximum design parameter represented in Table 3.23 for the construction cable corridor (temporary) does not align with calculations made elsewhere within the chapter. Natural England advises that the MDS should be consistent across ES chapters and named plans.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.21 (PDA-021).	Resolved. The justification and information provided in [PDA-021] satisfies Natural England's concerns. We acknowledge that the information in Table 3.23 [AS-024] relates specifically to the cable corridor within Blackpool Airport which is not applicable across the whole scheme.		The Applicants welcomes this response.
RI_G16	Natural England notes that the document states that proposed biodiversity benefit and ecological mitigation areas have not been subjected to surveys. Natural England advises that soil testing for basic soil properties (pH, SOM and					

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	macro-nutrients) should be completed at the same time as the ALC and soil survey.					
RI_G17	Natural England notes that it is stated that the location of representative auger boring surveys were chosen to reflect the main soil types identified within the Onshore Order Limits, according to the desktop information. Natural England advises that this is insufficient. Natural England advises that the ES should present the detailed and semi-detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey information across the full Study Area. This should include a breakdown of the ALC grades (area, %) in relation to the application site boundary and include ALC and soil data for the cable route and areas of permanent infrastructure and habitat enhancement.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.23 (PDA-021) and in within the Applicants' response to Hearing Action Points due at Deadline 1 (REP1-037). The Applicants stand by their position and maintain that further survey is not required. The Applicants note that Natural England have stated within their Deadline 2 Cover Letter (REP2-062) that they are reviewing this document and will be providing an update to the Risk and Issue Log at Deadline 3.	No change. The response to RI_G6 is also applicable here.		The Applicants have responded to Natural England's response in REP3-093.3 (S_D4_2.6) as well as in NE16 above.
RI_G18	It is unclear whether the archaeological trenches would meet the requirements to obtain relevant data (soil properties) to determine ALC grade. Natural England advises that further survey data should be provided to support the ES soils assessment and further monitoring requirements prior to construction agreed.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.24 (PDA-021) and in within the Applicants' response to Hearing Action Points due at Deadline 1 (REP1-037). The Applicants stand by their position and maintain that further survey is not required. The Applicants note that Natural England have stated within their Deadline 2 Cover Letter (REP2-062) that they are reviewing this document and will be providing an update to the Risk and Issue Log at Deadline 3.	No change. The response to RI_G6 is also applicable here.		The Applicants have responded to Natural England's response in REP3-093.3 (S_D4_2.6).
RI_G19	Natural England advises that the commitment needs to be secured in the DCO to not only reinstate the land but to ensure the site will be restored at a minimum to the same ALC grade as before construction, to ensure that land quality will not be negatively affected. The commitment to implementing additional measures to further benefit the land quality/productivity should also be included. We also advise that the Outline Soils Management Plan should include restoration criteria to ensure the land is aligned to the ALC survey results.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.26 (PDA-021) and in within the Applicants' response to Hearing Action Points due at Deadline 1 (REP1-037). The Applicants stand by their position and maintain that further survey is not required. The Applicants note that Natural England have stated within their Deadline 2 Cover Letter (REP2-062) that they are reviewing this document and will be providing an update to the Risk and Issue Log at Deadline 3.	No change.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.26 (PDA-021) and RI_G19 (REP3-055). The Applicants' position remains unchanged. Requirement 16, Schedules 2A&2B of the draft DCO {REP 3-009] notes that land would be reinstated within 12 months of the completion of the relevant stage of works.
RI_G20	Natural England advises that air quality impacts on ecological features including international and nationally designated sites and their qualifying features should be considered in the chapter.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.27 (PDA-021).	No change. Natural England notes that the information provided includes Red Scar and Tun Brook Woods SSSI, however information for other sites has not been provided including Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar and Ribble Estuary SSSI, Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI and Newton Marsh SSSI.		Table 3.18 in Volume 3, Chapter 3: Onshore ecology and nature conservation (APP-075) provides a summary of impacts that were scoped into the assessment; however, it does not provide a breakdown of topics that were assessed by IEF. Therefore, not all of the topics listed in Table 3.18 were assessed for each IEF. An assessment of potential air quality effects resulting from dust deposition arising during

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				In addition, effects due to changes in air quality (including dust) and deposition of pollutants associated with increases in vehicle movements for construction are identified as an impact pathway that's scoped in for further assessment in [APP-075] Table 3.18 (page 124). This is in contradiction to [APP-121] which identifies Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar, Ribble Estuary SSSI, Newton Marsh SSSI and Lytham St Annes Dines SSSI as sites sensitive to Air Quality impacts (dust).		earthworks, construction and trackout on sensitive features of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar, Ribble Estuary SSSI, Newton Marsh SSSI and Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI has been undertaken in Tables 9.34 and 9.35 of Volume 3 Chapter 9: Noise and Air Quality (APP-121) and the effects are assessed as negligible (paragraph 9.11.2.15). Therefore, these receptors were not carried over into the ecology assessment.
RI_G21	Natural England advises that further information is needed regarding the proposed mitigations measures to minimise/mitigate impacts on sand lizards e.g. measures to minimise vibration which could cause sand lizard burrows to collapse. The proposed mitigation (3.11.13.19) has not been previously discussed and agreed and the positioning of the cut-off trenches needs to be considered in terms of potential dewatering effect/damage to the foredunes.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.28 (PDA-021).	No change. The response RI_G40 is also applicable here.		A sand lizard mitigation plan has been prepared and added as an appendix to the Outline Ecology Management Plan (S_D4_14). CoT44 relating to the provision of a 100 m buffer between the edge of the SSSI dunes and the direct pipe exit pits on the beach has been updated to include provision of cut-off trenches to reduce vibration effects to the dunes. Further, the Applicants have committed to the avoidance of construction activities at the landfall over the winter period (November to March inclusive) to avoid disturbance to wintering birds (CoT110), which will also avoid the sand lizard hibernation period.
RI_G22	Natural England advise that a UXO contingency plan should be provided – should UXO be found within Lytham St. Annes Dunes SSSI.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.30 (PDA-021).	No change. Natural England acknowledges that [APP-068] makes reference to a UXO desk study report and that this includes a risk mitigation strategy as stated in [PDA-021]. Once the UXO desk study report is submitted into Examination this issue will be resolved.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.30 (PDA-021).
RI_G23	The Applicant has outlined the onshore survey area as a 150m buffer around the Onshore Order Limits. Natural England typically advise that a buffer of 200m should be used. Provide justification for why a 150m buffer was chosen and how this can be shown to be a sufficient distance to account for all disturbance incidents to Important Ecological Features (IEFs).		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.31 (PDA-021).	Natural England is satisfied with the Applicant's clarification on the survey limits in [PDA-021], this issue is now resolved.		The Applicants welcomes this response.
RI_G24	Natural England notes that for Sand Lizard – timing of works (piling / installation of cofferdams at TJB etc) could be used to minimise risk that vibration cause burrows to collapse when being used by hibernating or breeding Sand Lizard. Natural England advises that further consideration is given to timing restrictions for works near to known Sand Lizard populations.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.32 (PDA-021).	No change. The response for RI_G40 is also applicable here.		The Applicants have prepared and submitted an outline sand lizard mitigation plan (S_D4_14) which forms an appendix to the outline ecological management plan (J6/F04). The plan demonstrates that, with appropriate avoidance and the implementation of mitigation measures by the Applicants to manage potential impacts to sand lizards during construction, the construction of the Transmission Assets can proceed without the need for an EPS licence. The Applicants have committed to the avoidance of construction activities at the landfall over the winter

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						period (November to March inclusive) to avoid disturbance to wintering birds (CoT110), which will also avoid the sand lizard hibernation period.
RI_G25	Natural England advises that monitoring plans are updated to include pre and post construction monitoring of humid dune slacks. This will help to determine the success of the mitigation measures and confirm the assessment.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.34 (PDA-021).	No change. We refer the ExA to Appendix G3 of our Deadline 3 response.		The Applicants have responded to Natural England's response in REP3-093.3 (S_D4_2.6)
RI_G26	Natural England should be informed of any bentonite breakouts that occur on any SPA, Ramsar or SSSI sites or within any sand dune or foreshore habitats. Ground investigation works should be taken to inform consenting and to ensure the technical feasibility of any proposed mitigation associated with landfall installation methodology. Natural England advises that geotechnical data should be used to ensure that mitigation measures are fit for purpose and are relevant to the proposed installation methodology.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.36 (PDA-021).	No Change. We advise that an outline HDD/trenchless crossing management plan similar to that submitted into examination for North Falls is submitted into examination which encapsulates the bentonite breakout plan.		The Applicants prepared and submitted an outline hydrogeological risk assessment of the Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI (REP3-061) at Deadline 3. The Applicants welcome Natural Engand's comments on this document.
RI_G27	Fairhaven Saltmarsh is identified in the Outline Ecological Management Plan (J6) as a permanent mitigation area. Natural England advises that more details regarding the proposed permanent mitigation area at Fairhaven Saltmarsh – for example the fencing specification and installation measures are required The Applicant should also refer to Skelcher (2024) botanical report which covers this area (survey from 2010 & 2016)– showing the saltmarsh and sand dune communities that are present.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.36 (PDA-021).	In progress. The Applicant has now committed to a restriction on all construction activity from November to March (inclusive) at landfall. This addresses Natural England's concerns and AEoI can now be ruled out for the over-wintering features of the SPA. We still have concerns regarding the assessment and proposed mitigation. The additional information included in [REP2-045] and [REP2-018] is still lacking in detail in regards to mitigating impacts to passage features of the SPA.		The Applicants have submitted a 'clarification note on the current position with Natural England (re Adverse Effect on Integrity) and the Fairhaven saltmarsh mitigation area' in response to hearing action point 12 raised at Issue Specific Hearing 2 (S_D4_9). The note clarifies the current position with natural England (re adverse effect on integrity) and the Fairhaven saltmarsh mitigation area.
RI_G28	Natural England disagree with the conclusion of effect of changes in hydrogeology on the SSSI and LNR will be minor adverse - not significant. Natural England advises that further survey evidence should be provided to support the Application conclusions.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.39 (PDA-021).	No change. Our response to R1_G1 is also applicable here.		The Applicants submitted an Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment (REP3-061) at Deadline 3. This includes the assessment of the impacts to the SSSI and LNR. The Applicants anticipate comments from Natural England at Deadline 4.
RI_G29	Natural England has focused on coastal habitats and no SAC sites were identified within the Order of Limits. Natural England have not reviewed the HRA reports – but note sand dune habitats which could be classified as an Annex I habitat type have been covered in [APP-018]. Natural England advises that impacts to Ramsar habitats will be required.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.18 and RR-1601 1601.G.40 (PDA-021).	Resolved. Natural England is satisfied with the Applicant's clarification in [PDA-021] and we acknowledge the detail included in [APP-075] section 3.11.3.3 and consider this sufficient. For completeness we suggest the Applicant update the ES chapter (Table 3.7) to acknowledge that sand dunes are described as part of the Ribble and Alt		The Applicants welcomes this response.

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				Estuaries Ramsar description Site Information Service page notes.		
RI_G30	[APP-018] Table 1.24 does not consider all potential impact pathways or relevant European sites, specifically air quality impacts have not been considered. [APP-121] states the Ribble Estuary SPA/Ramsar includes features sensitive to dust within 20m of the Onshore Order Limits, therefore these features need to be considered in the HRA. Natural England advises that air quality impacts on internationally designated sites should be considered.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.41 (PDA-021).	No change. According to [APP-018] any supporting habitat is considered under Annex I habitats - offshore and coastal (section 1.4.2.2), however this part of the assessment does not consider air quality impacts. Any dust or traffic emissions from the proposal could impact these functional habitats and is therefore a potential pathway and needs to be considered within the HRA. In addition [APP-121] identified these sites as having air quality sensitive features.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.41 (PDA-021). However, please see response to RI_G20 above for additional air quality impact context.
RI_G31	Table 3.17 includes a list of all Important Ecological Features (IEFs) taken forward into assessment. Natural England advise the chapter to be updated to include information demonstrating why other IEFs have been scoped out for further assessment.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.42 (PDA-021).	No change. Red Scar and Tun Brook Woods SSSI is not included within Table 3.17 [APP-075], but Table 3.8 lists it as a nationally designated site within the onshore ecology study area, which will be considered. Natural England acknowledges that SSSI's are considered later in the chapter (page 161), but for clarity this should be included in Table 3.17 as it is a site of national importance that does require further assessment. Newton Marsh SSSI - Table 3.8 [APP-075] states that impacts on Newton Marsh SSSI are considered in [APP-090] Chapter 4: Onshore and Intertidal Ornithology as the notified features of the SSSI (aggregations of golden plover and black-tailed godwit) are not relevant to Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation. However effects due to changes in air quality are not considered in [APP-090]. As identified in [APP-121] Chapter 9: Air Quality, Newton Marsh SSSI has features which are sensitive to air quality impacts.		An assessment of potential air quality effects resulting from dust deposition arising during earthworks, construction and trackout on sensitive features of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar, Ribble Estuary SSSI, Newton Marsh SSSI and Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI has been undertaken in Tables 9.34 and 9.35 of Volume 3, Chapter 9: Noise and Air Quality (APP-121) and the effects are assessed as negligible (paragraph 9.11.2.15). Therefore, these receptors were not carried over into the ecology or ornithology assessments.
RI_G32	Table 3.40 and section 3.11.6.2 give the breakdown of coastal saltmarsh loss temp (0.03ha) and permanent (0ha). Natural England advises the Applicant provide further information on where the 0.03ha of saltmarsh loss will occur.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.43 (PDA-021).	No change. Natural England acknowledge the response in [PDA-021] however it is still unclear if there is actual loss of saltmarsh in this area. If the area has been surveyed and found to be species poor grassland, we question why this loss of saltmarsh is being included and not reported as temporary loss of species poor grassland. A map or a link to an existing map showing the area where the saltmarsh has been highlighted would be useful to further understand this point.		The paragraph beneath Table 3.40 of Volume 3, Chapter 3: Onshore ecology and nature conservation (APP-075) clarifies that the 'coastal saltmarsh' habitat has been identified from the MAGIC priority habitat layer; however this does not correctly reflect the 0.03 ha of habitat that is present and temporarily affected at Lea Marsh BHS based on the Phase 1 Habitat survey undertaken (paragraph 3.11.10.3). Species-poor grassland is not an important ecological feature for the purposes of the impact assessment, and therefore losses of this habitat type have not been quantified or assessed in the chapter.

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RI_G33	Although the Applicant has suggested that they will be using Natural England's District Level Licensing (DLL) Scheme, Natural England has not (as yet) approved the use of the DLL scheme for this project. Natural England has agreed in principle to the project using District level Licensing, however this is dependent on the availability of compensation ponds at the time of enquiry. Until an Impact Assessment and Conservation payment Certificate (IACPC) has been signed by the applicant and counter-signed by Natural England they cannot rely on District Level Licensing as a Licensing approach for this project.					
RI_G34	Natural England notes that in Table 3.15 the summary of key findings for species includes a potential outlying badger sett recorded within the Onshore Order Limits that appears disused. However, badgers are not considered further within Chapter 3, and no evidence is presented to confirm the outlying badger sett is not used. Badgers are a Protected Species under the 1992 Protection of Badgers Act, and it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure they have sufficient evidence to demonstrate the proposal will not impact on protected species. Therefore, Natural England is unable to provide a Letter of No Impediment for Badger at this time.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.45 (PDA-021).	Natural England notes the Applicant's commitment to undertake pre-commencement surveys to identify if works will be within 30m of a badger sett. We deem this approach acceptable but wish to highlight that a licence will be required should surveys identify an active badger sett. We note these measures are secured within the OEMP [REP2-019], which we support.		The Applicants welcomes this response.
RI_G35	Natural England notes the development is not subject to a mandatory net gain requirement and note the Applicant have outlined how they will deliver biodiversity benefit for areas of permanent habitat loss from permanent above-ground infrastructure using Defra BNG methodology and metric version 4.1 for the calculations. We also note that Lea Marsh BHS will be subject to habitat creation and enhancement measures. Unless there are changes in the design parameters we have no further comment to make during this examination.					
RI_G36	Natural England advise that topsoil bunds should not exceed 3m in height. Natural England advises that Application documents are updated to reflect best practice.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.49 (PDA-021).	Increasing topsoil storage mounds to 4 metres in height is generally not considered best practice, as it can compromise the physical and biological integrity of the soil, therefore our original comment is still applicable. However we note that the DEFRA code of practise for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites states 3-4m for topsoil bunds, therefore Natural England will not engage further on this issue.		The Applicants notes this response.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
RI_G37	Natural England disagrees that the depth of subsoiling operations will depend on the nature of the soil type affected and extent of any compaction that may have occurred. The depth of decompaction should reflect the depth of compaction. Natural England advises that the Applicant reconsider the information around soil compaction and consider producing an outline decompaction strategy to maximise the effectiveness of decompaction methods.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.50 (PDA-021).	Natural England is satisfied with the additional clarification providied by the Applicant in [PDA-021] with reference to [APP-200] on their approach to soil compaction.		The Applicants welcomes this response.
RI_G38	a) Natural England would welcome further discussion with the Applicant to determine the scale of impacts on the noctule hibernation bat roost and the judgement which their Ecologist has made regarding the possible abandonment of the noctule roost. b) If a licence is required, Natural England advise that quantitative data would be required on the roost, level of activity and use of the surrounding area.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.52 (PDA-022).	No change.		It is not considered that an EPS licence is required as the tree containing the noctule roost is outside the Order Limits and would be retained. The potential for disturbance during construction and subsequent abandonment of the roost was identified and assessed in the chapter as a worst-case scenario. Mitigation will aim to reduce the risk of disturbance (from construction noise and lighting) in the first instance once the construction activities to be undertaken at Penwortham are confirmed as part of the detailed design phase. The status of the roost, level of activity and use of the surrounding area would be captured through pre-construction surveys which are a commitment in the OEMP (CoT76). If it is subsequently determined that the level of disturbance and/ or damage to the roost (or any other roosts that may be identified during pre-construction surveys) would meet the threshold for EPS licensing, an application would be made to Natural England at that time.
RI_G39	Natural England advises that commitments should be made to ensure that updated badger surveys will be undertaken before works commence to confirm that no new setts have been created, and that the outlier sett remains disused.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.53 (PDA-022).	Resolved - see comment RI_34.		The Applicants welcomes this response.
RI_G40	Sand lizard: Given the detail contained within Section 3.11.13, the described works would likely require an A46 derogation licence to cover disturbance, damage and possibly destruction of habitat due to the exit pits for the routing of the cable within and beneath known sand lizard habitat. Natural England advise that further detail including population size estimates, mitigation and compensation should follow in a draft licence submission.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.54 (PDA-022).	No change. Natural England acknowledges the Applicant's response in PDA-022, however our original comment is still applicable. Please also see Natural England's response to ExA Q1 - Q6.1.5 - Q6.1.7.		The Applicants maintain the position that potential indirect disturbance effects from construction activities at the landfall site and temporary compounds do not meet the threshold for licensing. The Applicants also reiterate that there will be no damage or destruction of the dune habitats. The Applicants have provided an Outline Sand Lizard Mitigation Plan (S_D4_14) details the indirect disturbance impacts that have been considered and avoidance/mitigation measures that will be implemented.
RI_G41	Natural England advises that further information is required on the status of water vole burrows		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.55 (PDA-022).	"Resolved. Natural England acknowledges that additional surveys have been conducted and these results that have not altered the baseline survey		The Applicants welcomes this response.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	and the works to be undertaken in the water courses with water vole burrows present.			data. In the first instance NE agrees with impacts being avoided wherever possible by trenchless techniques or other means. NE advises that impacts from trenchless crossing techniques such as frac outs (if using HDD for example) are also considered and where necessary works timed to avoid the water vole breeding season in the event of any unintentional flooding. Where impacts cannot be avoided by trenchless crossing and a licence is required NE has the class licence (CL31) available. Alternatively if the conditions of this licence cannot be met an individual mitigation licence (A05) can be applied for.		
RI_G42	a) Natural England advises the Applicant to clarify the location of otter resting places in relation to the watercourses which may be used within the Onshore Order Limits. b) Further information about the cable installation route, associated impacts and proximity to otter resting places would be required to determine the level of impacts posed. c) Natural England would expect works impacting a natal holt to be avoided. d) Natural England welcomes the proposed habitat restoration and CoT76, however there is minimal detail on how this will be monitored to know if this is compensating for the loss and degradation of habitat during construction.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.56 (PDA-022).	No change. Natural England acknowledges the submissions at D2, [REP2-019] and [REP2-046], however the updates in these documents do not resolve the issue raised in our RR.		All otter field signs recorded during surveys are reported and mapped in Volume 3, Annex 3.12: Otter survey technical report (confidential) (APP-086). The Applicants maintain that there has been a detailed assessment of the potential impacts of the projects to otter, and that appropriate mitigation has been identified, including the provision of temporary resting/ breeding habitat through enhancements to Lea Marsh. The Applicants have committed to undertake an extensive programme of pre-construction surveys for protected species including otter, acknowledging that the baseline conditions (such as the presence of otter couches and holts) can change in the intervening period between the completion of surveys and the commencement of construction. Should the surveys identify any otter couches or holts that cannot be avoided, a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence would be sought from Natural England. The Applicants have committed to the adoption of trenchless crossing methods to cross all EA main watercourses in the Order Limits, including Savick Brook, River Ribble and Mill Brook, on which high levels of otter activity were recorded. It is therefore reasonable to assume that impacts to otter couches and holts would likely be entirely avoided.
RI_G43	There are several gaps in information regarding air quality emissions on designated sites during the construction, operational and decommissioning periods of the project. As a result, Natural England is unable to provide full comments on this impact pathway and state whether we agree with the conclusions on impacts on designated sites at present. These sites include: Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.57 (PDA-022).	No change.		An assessment of potential air quality effects resulting from dust deposition arising during earthworks, construction and trackout on sensitive features of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar, Ribble Estuary SSSI, Newton Marsh SSSI and Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI has been undertaken in Volume 3 Chapter 9: Noise and Air Quality (APP-121) and the effects are assessed as negligible (paragraph 9.11.2.15).

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	Newton Marsh SSSI Ribble Estuary SSSI Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA Ribble and Alt Estuary Ramsar Red Scar & Tun Brook Woods (Ancient Woodland & SSSI) In particular, Newton Marsh SSSI has been omitted from the air quality assessment and impacts on internationally designated sites (SPA/ SAC/ Ramsar) have not been considered, as highlighted in our previous [RR-1606]. a) We advise that additional information is provided on air quality impacts, as advised in this RR and our previous RR ([RR-1601] Appendix G Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation). b) Natural England advises for the aforementioned designated sites, air pollution impacts as a result of traffic, machinery and dust are considered and justification is provided for where impacts have been scoped out.					The designated sites scoped into the air quality assessment for construction vehicle emissions are listed in paragraph 1.1.1.4 of Volume 3 Annex 9.1 Air quality impacts on ecological designated sites (APP-122). As clarified in the previous response on this matter, in accordance with IAQM guidance, only ecological designations within 200 m of road links where the change in AADT flows exceed the relevant threshold are assessed.
RI_G44	The air quality assessment for designated ecological sites does not appear to consider sources of air pollution other than traffic and dust. Natural England advises that information on the use of machinery and equipment (including NRMM) is provided. This should include locations, duration of operations and minimum standard of NRMM and equipment with the potential to release pollutants which may impact designated sites, for both the construction areas and all temporary construction compounds. Air quality impacts for this pathway should include all statutory designated sites within a 200m screening distance from the machinery/NRMM, but is not limited to: Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI Newton Marsh SSSI Ribble Estuary SSSI Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA Ribble and Alt Estuary Ramsar Red Scar & Tun Brook Woods (Ancient Woodland & SSSI) If impacts on these sites can be screened out, please provide justification on this.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.58 (PDA-022).	No change.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.58 (PDA-022). Please refer to aforementioned response.
RI_G45	Newton Marsh SSSI is not included within the assessment of air quality impacts on designated sites, despite the SSSI being within 200m of the proposed works.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.59 (PDA-022).	No change. Our response to RI_G20 is equally applicable here.		The Applicants consider potential dust impacts on Newton Marsh SSSI have been adequately assessed (see paragraphs 9.11.2.11 to 9.11.2.15 in Volume 3 Chapter 9: Air quality).

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	We advise that all air quality impacts and sources of pollution (including impacts from traffic, dust and machinery/ equipment) are assessed for the SSSI.					Potential vehicle emissions during construction have not been assessed for Newton Marsh SSSI in accordance with standard IAQM guidance, because the SSSI is not within 200 m of a road link where the change in AADT flows exceeds the threshold for assessment (paragraph 1.1.1.4 of Volume 3 Annex 9.1: Air quality impacts on ecologically designated sites lists the designations meet the threshold for assessment).
RI_G46	Natural England requires clarification of the level of NOx emissions at Red Scar & Tun Brook Woods (Ancient Woodland & SSSI). If the annual-mean NOx PC is 1% of CL or more, then we advise further assessment of NOx emissions on the SSSI is required and should be secured in the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (OLEM).		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.60 (PDA-022).	No change.		The Applicants reiterate that the screening threshold of 1% is not exceeded for NOx at Red Scar and Tun Brook Woods SSSI.
RI_G47	NH3, nitrogen deposition and acid deposition. Natural England notes that Paragraph 3.11.5.11 – 3.11.5.17 of [APP-075] assesses the impacts of exceedance of critical levels for NH3, nitrogen deposition and acid deposition. Despite critical levels being exceeded, the Applicant rules out impacts due to absence of lower plant communities or already exceeded thresholds. Natural England advises that evidence is required on the presence/ absence of lower plant species within the area of exceedance of 1% threshold within the SSSI.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.G.61 (PDA-022).	No change. From reviewing Table 1.1 [APP-122], the Daily mean NOx Level as % of CL is 1 (as well as the annual mean), therefore from the data presented it shows that NOx Level Process Contribution (PC) does exceed 1%. In addition, as set out in section 1.2.6.3 the 100% of the long-term environmental standard should be used for local nature sites (i.e. for all sites assessed in this annex except Red Scar & Tun Brook Woods SSSI) which is correct. The long term environmental standard is the Predicted Environmental Concentrations (PEC). Natural England advise for designated sites a screening threshold of 1% of the PC, or more than 70% of the PEC. As the data shows the PC is greater than 1% for NOx, and no data is provided for the PEC, NE do not concur with justification provided in [PDA-022].		The Applicants consider that the assessment of potential impacts of NH_3, nitrogen deposition and acid deposition to the SSSI is adequate and that the construction of the Transmission Assets will not result in any significant effects to the designated features.

7.10 Risk and Issues Log – Onshore and Intertidal Ornithology

Table 7-10: Responses to questions regarding Onshore and Intertidal Ornithology

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
Risk and Issues Log Deadline 1 – Onshore and Intertidal Ornithology Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets Appendix H - Onshore and Intertidal Ornithology						
RI_H1	Surveys of intertidal and terrestrial wintering birds and terrestrial breeding birds have been completed to a minimal viable level on areas within the onshore order limits, with some areas within the red line boundary only being partially surveyed. Additionally, there is a lack of survey effort of surrounding areas in close proximity to work areas which are likely to be disturbed by construction works. Natural England's expectations are that two years of full survey are undertaken across the whole area plus the buffer to inform decision making. As further survey is unlikely to inform the Examination process due to time constraints, when considering the predictions of the Environmental Statement, the survey data should only be taken as a conservative assessment of the populations present and therefore the level of risk, rather than a precautionary one.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.1 and RR-1601 1601.H.9 (PDA-023).	No change.		The Applicants assert that the survey coverage has actually surpassed that of comparable DCO projects: • **Disturbance buffers** – The Applicants note that this was done, and they have made it clear in their application documents that the survey area includes a 500 m survey buffer to all onshore and intertidal infrastructure areas (F3.4.1 Volume 3, Annex 4.1: Breeding birds technical report – APP-091; F3.4.2 Volume 3, Annex 4.2: Wintering and migratory birds technical report – Part 1 of 2 – APP-092; F3.4.3 Volume 3, Annex 4.3: Intertidal birds technical report – APP-094 and F3.4.4 Volume 3, Annex 4.4: Onshore and intertidal ornithology survey methodologies – APP-095), and that these were surveyed over two years. The Applicants would welcome Natural England's response as to why 500 m is not deemed a sufficient buffer zone, especially considering other similar cable burial projects have used this distance or lower. The Applicants also note that this buffer was presented to Natural England during EWG01, throughout the EWG process, and again at PEIR, and at no point did Natural England raise any concerns. • **Intertidal surveys** – The Applicants note that both the spatial and temporal coverage for the intertidal surveys was 100% of that requested by Natural England at the scoping stage. In total 288 diurnal survey counts were made during the passage period over two years at both the landfall and the River Ribble crossing, in addition a further 36 nocturnal counts were made at the landfall. Spatial coverage of the study areas (including the 500 m buffer) was 100% during all surveys. These counts covered all tidal states and were conducted at all hours of the day and night. The Applicants are unclear why Natural England feel that this represents the minimal viable level, especially as the survey

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
						approach was agreed with Natural England during the Evidence Plan Process. • **Wintering bird surveys** – In comment Natural England appear to agree that survey coverage for the terrestrial waterbird surveys was good **"*Figure 1.8 illustrates a good coverage of surveying in 2022/23, with some gaps e.g. west end of Newton Marsh SSSI. The survey coverage in 2023/24 was good*"**. The Applicants note that coverage from the supplementary winter walkover surveys was patchier, however would like to stress that the data from these surveys were not used to inform the assessment of SPA features or annex 1 species but instead to fully characterise use by passerines such as starling or winter thrushes upon which there will be limited potential impacts. • **Breeding bird surveys** – Whilst the Applicants acknowledge that there were survey gaps they would like to note that the breeding bird surveys did inform the ISAA as there are no breeding gull or tern colonies within the habitats available within the onshore ornithology survey area. The breeding bird survey coverage achieved by the Applicants far exceeds that of similar projects both spatially and temporally. Unlike other linear infrastructure DCO projects, the Applicants have conducted surveys over two years, this has led to a maximum number of visits of nine which exceeds the six from the Hornsea 3 and 4 projects and triples that of Awel y Mor. Spatial coverage of areas of over six visits equates to 35.97% of the survey area (including the 500 m disturbance buffer) or **13,131,540m^2**. This is compared against figures of **1,979,208m^2** and **1,256,640m^2** from the much larger Hornsea projects 3 and 4 (53km and 39km corridors respectively compared to circa. 30km for Transmission Assets). The Applicants are therefore unclear on Natural England position that the onshore and intertidal surveys "*have [only] been completed to a minimal viable level*" and would seek Natural England's acknowledgement that coverage has in fact been good.

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RI_H2	The construction works are expected to last 66 months – this is a long term, albeit not permanent, time to be having an impact when measured in avian terms. The WCS could therefore mean that all birds impacted would be displaced from the entire terrestrial work area for the full 66 months. Natural England advise that the Applicant should consider phasing the works so that only a proportion of the terrestrial works corridor are impacted at any one time. This will greatly reduce the risk that the works present.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.2 and RR-1601 1601.H.32 (PDA-023).	No change.		The Applicants direct NE to Q1.13 of the 'Applicants' Response to Examining Authority's Written Questions (ExQ1)' (REP3-056) where the construction phases and scenarios are provided in detail.
RI_H3	**Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site – inadequate assessment of wintering intertidal features** There is not currently enough information within the Application to accurately identify and assess the impacts for wintering and passage features of Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site. Natural England advise that the Applicant should update the report to inform a HRA document to reflect the recorded numbers in the affected area, not a questionable area-based measure of habitat availability. A more detailed assessment of the usage of this area by SPA/Ramsar site species and the spatial and temporal patterns of that usage is required to understand the impacts of the proposal and inform mitigation strategies.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.3 and RR-1601 1601.H.59 (PDA-023). The Applicants anticipate further comments from Natural England on the following documents provided at Deadline 2: • Updated Outline Ecological Management Plan (REP2-018) • Technical note on the energetics of the birds at landfall and the adequacy of the Fairhaven Saltmarsh as mitigation (REP2-045).	Progressed but not resolved. The Applicant has now committed to a restriction on all construction activity from November to March (inclusive) at landfall. Whilst this has addressed our concerns for the over-wintering features of the SPA, we still have concerns regarding the assessment and proposed mitigation for impacts to passage waterbirds. We have concerns that the Applicant's Deadline 2 submissions are still lacking in detail in regards to mitigating impacts to passage waterbirds at the landfall and the proposed management at Fairhaven saltmarsh. Natural England will provide further advice on these matters as soon as possible and hope it is accepted at the Examiner's discretion. "		The Applicants note that during Deadline 2 they submitted S_D2_12 Technical note on the energetics of the birds at landfall and the adequacy of the Fairhaven Saltmarsh - Rev F01 (REP2-045). Within this the number of birds and frequency of counts was explored, the mean number of SPA passage features expected to be impacted during the construction activities on the intertidal areas of the landfall: • Ringed plover – 0.57 • Dunlin – 3.63 • Sanderling – 5.61 • Redshank – 0.13 In addition to the low numbers of birds that regularly use the impacted areas at the landfall, the impacts are temporary and reversible, therefore there can be no lasting adverse effects on site integrity. The Applicants remain fully committed to addressing these matters and to working collaboratively with Natural England to reach a resolution. In support of this commitment, the Applicants met with Natural England on 25 July 2025 and are working closely with Natural England to address this issue and are currently in discussions about measures to reduce impacts at source. Following Issue specific hearing 2 (ISH2), the Applicants are submitting, at Deadline 4, a note providing clarification on their current position with Natural England concerning the Adverse Effect on Integrity including additional source-level mitigation and the Fairhaven saltmarsh mitigation area (AEoI - ISH2.12).

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						In the case that these address Natural England's concerns, they have been clear in their response to ExA Q6.1.2 (REP3-095) that: "*Were the Applicant able to reduce disturbance effects at the landfall during the passage season to acceptable levels through mitigation, it would offer in our view sufficient certainty to rule out adverse effects. Were this to be the case, the Fairhaven Saltmarsh proposal could be seen as either addressing the residual, non-AEoI effects of the development, or alternatively as an enhancement measure.*"
RI_H4	**Adverse effects on the Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA and Ramsar site due to landfall works** The landfall site and adjacent areas supports very significant numbers of SPA/Ramsar site birds during the winter and passage periods. However, the Applicant only proposes some limitations to working during these sensitive periods – a limit of 5 weeks working in November-February, with no restrictions to working outside this period. This approach both to the winter period (which we consider to run from November to March inclusive) and the lack of any restriction during passage periods will provide insufficient mitigation. In the absence of a full seasonal restriction for the appropriate periods, or a compelling case that a lower level of restriction is acceptable, Natural England advises that an AEOI cannot be ruled out. A comprehensive seasonal restriction for the sensitive winter and passage periods should be carefully considered in, with the relevant months should be identified with respect to site-specific data and SPA conservation advice.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.4 and RR-1601 1601.H.21 (PDA-023). The Applicants anticipate further comments from Natural England on the following documents provided at Deadline 2: • CoT129 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments Register (REP2-010) • Technical note on the energetics of the birds at landfall and the adequacy of the Fairhaven Saltmarsh as mitigation (REP2-045).	In progress. Please see RI_H3 above. Whilst our concerns regarding overwintering SPA waterbirds is resolved, those relating to passage SPA waterbirds are outstanding.		See RI_H3 above
RI_H5	Unless an effective seasonal restriction can be committed to, we advise that an in-principle derogations case for the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar site will need to be developed under the Habitats Regulations, demonstrating that there are no alternative solutions and Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest, including that a greater level of seasonal restriction is not achievable. In this light, the proposed roosting refuge would constitute compensatory measures under the Habitats Regulations~~,~~ Accordingly, a far more detailed submission regarding the installation and management of the compensatory measures is needed addressing Natural England's concerns, and a compensation schedule in the DCO added. To ensure the compensatory measures are targeted and effective, it is critical that the significance of the affected area for SPA and Ramsar site species and		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.5, RR-1601 1601.H.23 and RR-1601 1601.H.60 (PDA-023). The Applicants anticipate further comments on the following documents provided at Deadline 2: • CoT129 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments Register (REP2-010) • Technical note on the energetics of the birds at landfall and the adequacy of the Fairhaven Saltmarsh as mitigation (REP2-045).	"No change. The Applicant have not fully considered how they might reduce impacts at the landfall location before considering mitigation options elsewhere. Every effort should be made to follow the mitigation hierarchy. Natural England will provide advice on these matters as soon as possible and submit it into Examination at the Examiner's discretion. Our response to ExA Q1 - Q6.1.2 provides more detail on the question of whether the Fairhaven saltmarsh proposals are mitigation or compensation measures. "		See RI_H4 above

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	their specific requirements from it are adequately described. Additionally, the Applicant should provide evidence that the use of the proposed area is currently compromised by disturbance (noting it falls within the SPA), and that the energy saving for the compensation proposal will be sufficient to offset impacts.					
RI_H6	**Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar – inadequate assessment of impacts on terrestrial waterbirds:** Natural England do not agree with the Applicant's HRA conclusions. We note that the current conclusions are based on modelled information on likely habitat availability. This is often based on out-of-date information and models that claim urban/infrastructure areas are available foraging habitat. The focus should be on the populations revealed by the site-specific surveys rather than generic assumptions. Furthermore, there is a lack of information regarding the spatio-temporal implications of the habitat loss. With regards to mitigation, we advise that the Applicant provides further information on how the tunnel end works of the Ribble crossing will be managed to ensure no disruption to SPA/Ramsar site waterbirds moving along the corridor of the estuary. The justification of only using trenchless techniques is inadequate.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.6 and RR-1601 1601.H.52 (PDA-023). The Applicants have submitted a technical note on Newton Marsh SSSI and River Ribble Crossing (REP2-044) at Deadline 2. The Applicants anticipate further comment by Natural England on the information provided at Deadline 2 in relation to this matter at Deadline 3.	"In progress. [REP2-044] provides further information with respect to visual and noise disturbance on birds utilising the River Ribble Crossing. The additional information satisfies Natural England's concerns due to the natural topography of the bank and location of compounds for trenchless techniques reducing impacts to SPA features. However, further information is still required to satisfy our concerns regarding HRA conclusions and spatio-temporal implications from other construction activities. Natural England will provide further advice on these matters as soon as possible and hope it is accepted at the Examiner's discretion. "		The Applicants note the conclusions of the assessment presented within the Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 2, Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment Part Three – Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar Site assessments (APP-017) are based on the maximum peak number of birds (derived from site-specific surveys) combined with a habitat availability approach that considers the species' foraging ranges. This approach informs the proportion of potential suitable habitats within the SPA that are affected by the proposed work. This Approach is deemed to be robust to determine AEOI. The Applicants welcome Natural England's confirmation of noAEOI at the River Ribble crossing.
RI_H7	**Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA – mitigation for terrestrial impacts/compensation** The proposed mitigation measures are hoping to support the needs of a number of species with different ecological needs, however no information is included showing clear design and management information to ensure that these areas are going to be fit for purpose. The terrestrial mitigation areas need reviewing against the specifics of the species (and the number of those species) that they need to host, which relates to the above comments around the phasing of works and being able to accommodate all displaced birds from the whole onshore order limits. Detailed site assessments that articulate site management and structure in relation to the role they need to fulfil need to be generated.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.6, RR-1601 1601.H.22 and RR-1601 1601.H.61 (PDA-023). The Applicants anticipate further comments on the Updated Outline Ecological Management Plan (REP2-018) at Deadline 3.	No change. Natural England will provide advice on the Applicant's submissions regarding these matters as soon as possible and hope it is accepted at the Examiner's discretion.		The Applicants have provided an update on these issues at Deadline 4 within a Terrestrial Waterbirds technical note (S_D4_17) and updates to the OEMP (J6 Outline Ecological Management Plan. APP-212) to reflect how the mitigation will provide for all species.
RI_H8	The potential impacts on Newton Marsh SSSI have not been adequately assessed. There is minimal information on what works will take place in close proximity to this site and how the work will be managed to not affect the site with respect to visual and noise disturbance.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.8 and RR-1601 1601.H.15 (PDA-023). The Applicants anticipate further comments on the technical note on Newton Marsh SSSI and River Ribble Crossing (REP2-044) at Deadline 3.	"Resolution in progress. [REP2-044] satisfies our concerns relating to visual and noise disturbance on Newton Marsh SSSI. We advise the Applicant to include appropriate text in the ISAA to reflect these updates. This is necessary as the site is used by SPA birds, and therefore		The Applicants welcome Natural England's decision of no AEOI at Newton Marsh SSSI. The Applicants have committed to update information in HRA Stage 2 Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment Part Three (APP-017) at Deadline 5.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	Further justification should be provided on how the Applicant has concluded no risk to the site. Proper consideration of this area is also applicable to the HRA as the site is well used by SPA birds, particularly in winter.			the issue is an SPA/Ramsar site as well as an SSSI matter. Provided that these updated documents are submitted into examination, we believe this issue will be readily resolved. "		
RI_H9	Reliance on the Functionally Linked Land (FLL) description in Bowland Ecology (2021) is flawed for the purposes of this survey. Natural England do not agree with the criteria used for FLL threshold. Natural England requires further information on reasoning for not using standard 1% threshold for measuring significance of FLL. Further, Natural England advises the Applicant to ensure all figures for species are included and consider the possibility of FLL for the species referenced.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.10 and RR-1601 1601.H.11 (PDA-023).	No change. Whilst the Applicant has clarified that they are using the 1% population threshold for FLL, we are not persuaded that the full suite of species that might be affected by loss of FLL has been identified.		The Applicants have provided more detailed information on the full suite of SPA species occurring in numbers exceeding 1%, based on baseline surveys. This information has been presented to Natural England on 25 July and is included in the Terrestrial Waterbirds technical note (S_D4_17) at deadline 4.
RI_H10	Natural England requires clarification on the lapwing data and queries why the two years of data are being listed out separately, when the data represents two phases of one survey.					
RI_H11	Natural England do not agree with the justification for not following the SNH (2017) guidelines and require further information on mitigation for the impacts. Although construction is temporary, impact risk will largely depend on construction approach (and some permanent infrastructure/potential permanent land use change in mitigation areas), which could last up to 66 months.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.13 (PDA-023).	No change.		The Applicants note that the SNH guidance, which was developed to address the permanent, generational impacts of wind turbines—such as increased mortality resulting from permanent displacement and collision risks—is not proportionate when applied to the temporary and reversible impacts of construction activities at the cable corridor. Furthermore, the reversible impacts are to be mitigated by supplementary feeding at Lytham Moss. The Applicants would like to draw attention to Natural England's advice provided to Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Farm (Relevant Representations of Natural England for the construction and operation of the Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Farm located approximately 54km from the Lincolnshire Coast in the Southern North Sea). "*Provisioning of grain and / or sugar beet at an undisturbed location elsewhere along the Norfolk coast could provide an alternative foraging resource, offsetting any effects of displacement due to development. It is anticipated such work could be delivered at a considerable cost-saving to developers; removing the need for crop-mapping, goose surveys and complex energetic modelling which might, regardless, still lead to a requirement for some form of mitigation*."

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
						It is noted that this area specific but Natural England also state that: "*It is Natural England's view that it is possible to extrapolate the principles of this advice in regard to avoidance and supplementary feeding as mitigation for sustainable development projects impacting on Annex I geese at other locations*." The Applicants note that the inclusion of the feeding as mitigation should therefore negate the need for any surveys.
RI_H12	It is unclear from the report for geese, ducks and swans, waders and gulls and terns if this is referring to birds that are actually breeding or commenting on non-breeding birds gathering in the breeding season. Natural England advise the Applicant that reporting on non-breeding gatherings during the breeding season would be better presented as a separate report/separate section.					
RI_H13	Natural England notes the incomplete coverage in the survey (0-9 visits = incomplete coverage.) Natural England advises that all areas should have received some survey visits, and that the gaps in coverage inevitably reduce the confidence in the assessment conclusions as regards number and distribution of birds.					
RI_H14	Natural England note that a number of these species are also non-breeding interest of the Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA and there may be functional linkage. Natural England advises the Applicant to consider the potential for FLL for these species and whether there is potential to impact if so.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.17 (PDA-023).	No change.		The Applicants commit to providing more detailed information on the full suite of SPA species occurring in numbers exceeding 1%, based on baseline surveys. This information was presented to Natural England on 25th July and is included in the Terrestrial Waterbirds technical note (S_D4_17) at Deadline 4.
RI_H15	Natural England note the survey limitations are reasonably well characterised, however it is not clear if survey effort was sufficient for 'difficult' species. For example, breeding waterfowl, raptors and crepuscular species. The Applicant should provide clarity on survey effort limitations for species which are considered more difficult to survey.					
RI_H16	Whilst Natural England acknowledges the consideration of Chapter 9 Air Quality [APP-121], as these impacts could also relate to onshore and intertidal ornithology, they should be assessed within this chapter.					
RI_H17	The Applicant still intends to carry out up to five weeks of work during the high sensitivity period of November - March inclusive. Natural England advises that all potentially disturbing works should		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.21 (PDA-023).	The Applicant has now committed to a restriction on all construction activity from November to March (inclusive) at landfall. This addresses Natural England's concerns and		The Applicants welcomes this response.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	be excluded over this period. We also advise consistency when defining the over-wintering period, which should be the same across all documents and commitments.		The Applicants anticipate further comments on the following documents provided at Deadline 2: • CoT129 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments Register (REP2-010) • Technical note on the energetics of the birds at landfall and the adequacy of the Fairhaven Saltmarsh as mitigation (REP2-045).	AEoI can now be ruled out for the over-wintering features of the SPA.		
RI_H18	Natural England requires more information to ascertain why the following statement could be impossible when there is uncertainty regarding the origin of the birds: *"the 353 lesser black-backed gull reported in Table 1.67 cannot all belong to the Ribble and Alt SPA, Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA and Ramsar, and the Bowland Fells SPA."*					
RI_H19	The citation counts and the peak count recorded during the site-specific surveys identifies that many (almost all) species are at >1% of citation value and > 1% of most recent count (noting that this is only noted for Ribble and Alt Estuary SPA for most species). These surveys indicate the importance of the area and the subsequent importance of mitigationg, predominantly all at >1%.					
RI_H20	Natural England advise that Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary SPA and Morecambe Bay Ramsar are two separate sites and have different geographical boundaries. Duddon Estuary Ramsar should also be considered and is a separate site.					
RI_H21	Natural England advise the inclusion of the most up to date digital aerial survey for the Bowland Fells Lesser Black-backed Gull Colony Count.					
RI_H22	Over 2% of golden plover were found on the area of permanent habitat loss. Although the area represents 0.04% of the total foraging range, the number of golden plover using the area implies it is an important area. Natural England advises the Applicant consider why it may be preferentially used by golden plover, and how this will be replicated in the mitigation areas.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.28 (PDA-023).	No change. RI_H7 is also applicable here.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.28 (PDA-023). The Applicants continue to disagree with Natural England's assertion that the land is preferentially used by over 2% of the SPA population as this would also be determined by frequency. Golden plover were only recorded once out of 14 survey visits. As a precautionary measure, the Applicants have proposed mitigating impacts on birds based on the average number potentially affected by permanent habitat loss, estimated at 0.2% of the SPA population. The Applicants also note that the area of proposed mitigation is similar in size to that being lost and also

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
						that the grassland will be managed to increase prey resource at Newtown-with-Scales. This, combined with the open aspect and scrapes which will provide roosting opportunities, will provide adequate mitigation for the infrequent use of the pasture at the substations. The Applicants have provided an updated OEMP (J6 Outline Ecological Management Plan. APP-212) at Deadline 4 to reflect how the mitigation will provide for golden plover.
RI_H23	Natural England requires further information from the Applicant to understand if any appraisal has been made to quantify if the proposed mitigation/compensation ground is sufficient to mitigate the loss. Regularity of usage is an important factor to understand if mitigation areas will reliably accommodate the additional displaced birds.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.29 (PDA-023).	No change. RI_H7 is also applicable here.		See above, golden plover were only recorded within the substation footprint once out of 14 surveys, therefore the average number of birds was 7.4 or 0.2% of the SPA citation. Therefore, the Applicants believe that the proposed mitigation is more than adequate to accommodate this small number of birds, especially considering that the mitigation area is similar in size to the area being lost.
RI_H24	Langley et al., (2022). appears to have been omitted from the references. Update the document to include the reference as cited.					
RI_H25	The figures set out in Table 1.76 [APP-017] appear to only represent the area of physical ground disturbance arising from the proposal not visual or acoustic disturbance which will extend some 100's of meters (varying between species) from the works. Temporary habitat loss will therefore be much greater than suggested in the MDS. Further, recovery time of disturbed ground needs to be considered as there is minimal mention of recovery time beyond completion of works.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.31 (PDA-023).	No change.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.31 (PDA-023). The Applicants acknowledge Natural England's comment regarding habitat recovery. This is addressed in paragraph 1.4.1.4 of the "S_D2_12 Technical Note on the Energetics of the Birds at Landfall and the Adequacy of the Fairhaven Saltmarsh - Rev F01 (REP2-045).
RI_H26	Natural England strongly advises the Applicant to provide further information on the onshore works and ensuring work is staggered appropriately. We suggest the Applicant either needs to provide information to ensure that the mitigation areas really can support all disturbed features in the terrestrial area for the whole period or the Applicant need to identify a works approach that reduces the risk at any one point in time (but still ensure that the mitigation land can support the scaled down risk).		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.33 (PDA-023).	No change.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.33 (PDA-023).
RI_H27	Natural England notes that there is a definite impact for 24 months at this fixed point (400kV grid connection cable). We further note that there does not appear to be any identified mitigation for the risk of light and noise affecting the river corridor. Natural England advise the Applicant to review work approaches and clarify how risk from sound/light		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.34 (PDA-023).	Resolved. [REP2-044] provides further information with respect to visual and noise disturbance on birds utilising the River Ribble Crossing. The additional information satisfies Natural England's concerns due to the natural topography of the bank and location of compounds for trenchless techniques reducing		The Applicants welcome Natural England's decision to rule out AEOI at the River Ribble crossing. The Applicants have committed to update information in HRA Stage 2 Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment Part Three (APP-017) at Deadline 5.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	disturbance is to be mitigated for a period of up to 24 months.			impacts to SPA features. Once this information is included in the ISAA this issue will be readily resolved.		
RI_H28	Natural England note that while it is correct that pink-footed geese do not forage in the intertidal they do roost on the intertidal, which will not have been captured in the 'overlap analysis' and should be included.					
RI_H29	Natural England do not agree with the whole meta-population approach based on a radius around different roosts. This is not appropriate methodology for SPA site-based assessment. The applicant's survey data identifies the risk they should be considering through their determination of the size of the population that will be impacted. Apportioning by site would be appropriate for the assessment.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.36 (PDA-023).	No change.		The Applicants have previously addressed this matter in RR-1601 1601.H.36 (PDA-023). The Applicants point out that the assessment accounts for both the proportion of the relevant SPAs and the metapopulation. For example, in paragraph 1.6.3.111 of APP-017, the Applicants state that this equates to "*70.72% of the SPA citation count of pink-footed goose, or 21.45% of the current WeBS SPA count, or 14.9% of the metapopulation*." Accordingly, the Applicants do not consider this to be a concern and observe that apportioning would likely result in a less precautionary assessment.
RI_H30	"Eleven Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA ornithological features were present within the intertidal environment at the landfall, 9 of which are at >1% SPA. The Applicant should ensure all >1% SPA features are taken through to LSE and AA as significant risks are present to all these features.					
RI_H31	Natural England requires the Applicant to provide clarification on the beach/landfall Direct Pipe Trenchless installation. Natural England note the commitment to minimise time spent in the intertidal period, however we require clarification on whether the stated two-week period of beach works per cable include delivery and set up/removal of equipment and what will be the risk to the foreshore associated with cable pull.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.38 (PDA-023).	Resolved. [REP2-045] provides clarification the duration of works per cable at landfall and within the intertidal. Natural England are satisfied with the additional information as it allows us to better understand the level of activity, though please note our concerns regarding passage SPA waterbirds remain outstanding.		The Applicants welcome this response. The Applicants have committed to update information in HRA Stage 2 Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment Part Three (APP-017) (for onshore and offshore ornithology) at Deadline 5.
RI_H32	Natural England notes that Still et al. (2015) is repeatedly cited but is not included in the reference list. The study is heavily used as to discuss various species; however, the study is 10 years old and considers bird distribution in a dynamic environment, therefore it may not be that it can be relied upon.					
RI_H33	The ES predicts the proposal will affect over 2% of 9 species; of which 3 have more than 10% of population potentially affected. Natural England notes these figures do not account for disturbance, which could potentially affect a greater area, resulting in larger areas of temporary habitat loss. Natural England do not support the assertion that the percentage of features affected is not significant		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.40 (PDA-023). The Applicants anticipate further comments on the following documents provided at Deadline 2: • CoT129 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments Register (REP2-010)	In progress. Matters regarding overwintering intertidal waterbirds are now resolved, however those relating to passage intertidal waterbirds and terrestrial waterbirds are outstanding. RI_H3 is also applicable here.		See RI_H4 above for response to the intertidal waterbirds. The Applicants have provided further clarification on the species for which FLL exists and how the proposed mitigation provides for these in the Terrestrial Waterbirds technical note (S_D4_17) at Deadline 4.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	because the SPA is big. For wintering intertidal features; Natural England do not agree with the conclusion of a negligible impact from a temporary loss of supporting habitat and/or resource availability – the Applicant need to identify the actual disturbance footprint and confirm that the figures of birds at risk reflect this and not just the direct area being worked over.		• Technical note on the energetics of the birds at landfall and the adequacy of the Fairhaven Saltmarsh as mitigation (REP2-045).			
RI_H34	For passage intertidal features Natural England do not agree with the conclusion that impacts can be ruled out. Reliance on alternate feeding would require knowledge of why this area is so important and consideration in the first instance of seasonal restrictions to works for important passage periods for the species of concern. This also applies to the passage features of the SPA and Ramsar site.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.40 (PDA-023). The Applicants anticipate further comments on the following documents provided at Deadline 2: • CoT129 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments Register (REP2-010) • Technical note on the energetics of the birds at landfall and the adequacy of the Fairhaven Saltmarsh as mitigation (REP2-045).	No change.RI_H3 is also applicable here.		See RI_H4 above
RI_H35	Natural England do not agree with the logic and discussion on foraging ranges as tracking data from the Ribble doesn't consider spatial displacement by Bowland (which currently supports many of the Ribble birds). Natural England agree that on this occasion there is no LSE.					
RI_H36	Natural England note that Preston Docks birds are assumed to be the displaced SPA colony, therefore it would be helpful to assess risk in the context of observed birds and this population.					
RI_H37	Natural England do not agree with the conclusions and advise the Applicant to consider the recommendations made above regarding conclusions made for wintering and passage birds and temporary habitat loss/disturbance at landfall (H41/H42).		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.44 (PDA-023). The Applicants anticipate further comments on the following documents provided at Deadline 2: • CoT129 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments Register (REP2-010) • Technical note on the energetics of the birds at landfall and the adequacy of the Fairhaven Saltmarsh as mitigation (REP2-045).	Resolution in progress. RI_H3 is also applicable here.		See response to RI_H3 above
RI_H38	Further evidence is required to support the statement that trenchless techniques will avoid habitat loss at the Ribble crossing. Additional information on habitat loss from trenchless techniques, i.e. installation of equipment, onshore infrastructure at trench entry and exit pits needs to be considered and appropriately screened.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.45 (PDA-023).	Natural England is satisfied with the additional information provided on the trenchless installation techniques at the River Ribble crossing.		The Applicants welcome this response.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
RI_H39	Shelduck numbers are clearly high in the area. More information on the habitats being used may shed light on the required mitigation requirements. Natural England advise the Applicant to include shelduck into the calculations for the mitigation areas currently for pink footed goose and whooper swan and consider in more detail what function the habitats being made unavailable provided for the species. However, the Applicant should also consider the density of birds potentially using the mitigation areas and what risks there may be e.g. disease.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.46 (PDA-023).	No change.		The Applicants found no evidence supporting the use of supplementary feeding with grain and root crops for non-breeding shelduck. Therefore, supplementary feeding will not benefit the non-breeding shelduck SPA feature. Non-breeding shelduck feed almost exclusively on marine gastropods. Given their reliance on intertidal habitats for foraging, the impact of construction activities in terrestrial habitats is predicted to be negligible; consequently, mitigation is not considered necessary.
RI_H40	Natural England agree that in the long term the conclusions are appropriate for wigeon, but this conclusion does not account for effects in the short-term. Natural England advises the Applicant to consider measures to reduce impacts to wigeon in the short-term, noting that spatial scheduling of the works may reduce the requirements for this and other species. Please see advice above regarding shelduck.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.47 (PDA-023).	No change.		The Applicants have determined that non-breeding wigeon do not rely on functionally linked terrestrial habitats across the cable corridor as most wigeon recorded during surveys were recorded within Newton Marsh SSSI and Natural England has now agreed that there are no impacts upon Newton Marsh SSSI. Consequently, no mitigation is required, as no impacts are anticipated. Wigeon were mainly recorded within the Newton Marsh SSSI, which lies within the survey area but outside the cable corridor. It should be noted that Natural England has confirmed that there are no potential impacts on the Newton Marsh SSSI (AS-078). Further clarification will be provided in a Terrestrial Waterbirds technical note (S_D4_17) at Deadline 4. Please, see comments about shelduck above.
RI_H41	Natural England advises the Applicant to consider measures to reduce impacts to teal in the short-term. Please see advice above regarding shelduck and wigeon above.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.48 (PDA-023).	No change.		Further clarification on the suitability of the mitigation measures for teal at Newton-with-Scales and Lytham Moss are inlcuded in the revised Outline Ecological Management Plan (APP-212) at Deadline 4.
RI_H42	Natural England note the commitment to improving nearby areas of habitat for waders such as golden plover.The Applicant should provide more information on the proposed habitat improvements to ensure the measures are appropriate.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.49 (PDA-023).	No change. Natural England will provide advice on the Applicant's submissions regarding these matters as soon as possible and hope it is accepted at the Examiner's discretion.		Further details on the mitigation measures at Newton-with-Scales and Lytham Moss are inlcuded in the revised Outline Ecological Management Plan (APP-212) at Deadline 4.
RI_H43	Natural England note that Jourdan et al. (2022) report/paper is repeatedly referenced, but not included in the reference list.					
RI_H44	Natural England do not agree with the conclusion for black-tailed godwit.The Applicant should reassess their assessment framework and consider the proportions of the passage and winter populations that could be affected. If adverse effects could arise, mitigation habitat should be provided that will cater for the requirements of the species.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.51 (PDA-023).	No change.		Further clarification on the suitability of the mitigation measures for black-tailed godwit are inlcuded in the revised Outline Ecological Management Plan (APP-212) at Deadline 4

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
RI_H45	Natural England do not agree with the conclusion of no AEOI for temporary loss of supporting habitats and/or resource availability for the features that utilise terrestrial habitats for the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA. The Appropriate Assessment should focus on the populations revealed by the surveys, rather than modelled information. Natural England advises the following additional evidence is also required: •Details of the locations of the alternative supporting habitat qualifying species can use, including their distance from the proposal boundary and size. •Further details of how the applicant will ensure the recovery of the temporary habitat loss. This should include details of mechanisms that will be put in place to ensure the supporting habitat recovers, and predicted timescales.		The Applicants are clear that impacts on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar terrestrial features are sufficiently mitigated and have updated the Outline Ecological Management Plan with added detail on these mitigation measures (REP2-018) The Applicants are awaiting Natural England's response to this.	No change.		The Applicants note the conclusions of the assessment presented within the Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 2, Information to Support an Appropriate Assessment Part Three – Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar Site assessments (APP-017) are based on the maximum peak number of birds (from site-specific surveys) combined with a habitat availability approach that considers the species' foraging ranges. This approach informs the proportion of potential suitable habitats within the SPA that are affected by the proposed work
RI_H46	The SPA non-breeding waterbird assemblage is a feature in its own right, therefore all the other species that contribute to it also have to be considered, in particular in this case in terms of numbers, as diversity and quality are more likely to be robust at a site scale. Natural England advise the Applicant to revisit the framing of [APP-017] and re-consider impacts/risks and compensation and mitigations options and planning for managing the risks.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.53 and RR-1601 1601.H.55 (PDA-023).			At the meeting on 25th July with Natural England, the Applicants provided a list of species that were not individually assessed in the ISAA. While all non-named assemblage species recorded during the site-specific surveys were evaluated in the EIA, 25 of these species were excluded from the ISAA assessment. Due to their generally low numbers, wide distribution, and status as naturalised species, these species are considered to be of negligible or no impact from the proposed works, and no mitigation is required. This information has been submitted as part of the terrestrial waterbirds technical note submitted at Deadline 4 (S_D4_17).
RI_H47	Natural England note the following statement : "*..all features have been assessed independently there is not predicted to be any additional impact ..*" and do not agree with this conclusion and methodology in relation to the breeding waterbird assemblage, but note the conclusion of no AEOI is likely to be correct in this instance.					
RI_H48	Natural England disagrees with the conclusions for Dunlin as a Ramsar site feature for the same reasons as identified for other intertidal waders.		The Applicants have submitted further information regarding the energetics of the passage features at the Landfall (Technical note on the energetics of the birds at landfall and the adequacy of the Fairhaven Saltmarsh - Rev F01 (REP2-045)). This was provided at the request of Natural England and the Applicants are awaiting Natural England's response to this.	No change.		The Applicants remain fully committed to addressing these matters and to working collaboratively with Natural England to reach a resolution. In support of this commitment, the Applicants met with Natural England on 25 July 2025 and are working closely with Natural England to address this issue and are currently in discussions about measures to reduce impacts at source.
RI_H49	Natural England disagrees with the conclusions for Black-tailed godwit as a Ramsar feature for the same reasons as identified for other terrestrial waders.		The Applicants are clear that impacts for the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar terrestrial features are being mitigated for and have updated the outline Ecological	No change.		Further clarification on the suitability of the mitigation measures for black-tailed godwit is provided in the revised Outline Ecological Management Plan (OEMP) at Deadline 4.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
			Management Plan with added detail on these mitigations (REP2-018). The Applicants are awaiting Natural England's response to this.			
RI_H50	The assessment of habitat loss during the operational phase is based on habitat loss in a different site (Liverpool Bay SPA). Natural England advises the Applicant to update the report and include the habitat loss during Operation & Maintenance in Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA.					
RI_H51	Fairhaven Saltmarsh is identified as a mitigation area, however questions remain over its suitability. Natural England strongly advise the Applicant to produce some supplemental information clarifying why this proposal is considered likely to be effective, clarifying the management required to support delivery, and justifying its energetic value to the species impacted.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.60 (PDA-023). The Applicants anticipate further comments on the technical note on the energetics of the birds at landfall and the adequacy of the Fairhaven Saltmarsh as mitigation (REP2-045) provided at Deadline 2.	No change. Natural England will provide advice on the Applicant's submissions regarding these matters as soon as possible and hope it is accepted at the Examiner's discretion.		The Applicants remain fully committed to addressing these matters and to working collaboratively with Natural England to reach a resolution. In support of this commitment, the Applicants met with Natural England on 25 July 2025 and are working closely with Natural England to address this issue and are currently in discussions about measures to reduce impacts at source.
RI_H52	The level of detail presented in the mitigation area summaries for intertidal mitigation and terrestrial mitigation is not sufficient to fulfil the expectations of the HRA with regards to certainty of outcome. Produce some supplemental information clarifying why this proposal is considered likely to be effective, clarifying management to support delivery, and justifying its energetic value to the species impacted.		The Applicants have responded previously in RR-1601 1601.H.61 (PDA-023). The Applicants anticipate further comments on the technical note on the energetics of the birds at landfall and the adequacy of the Fairhaven Saltmarsh as mitigation (REP2-045) provided at Deadline 2.	No change. RI_H7 is also applicable here.		The Applicants remain fully committed to addressing these matters and to working collaboratively with Natural England to reach a resolution. In support of this commitment, the Applicants met with Natural England on 25 July 2025 and are working closely with Natural England to address this issue and are currently in discussions about measures to reduce impacts at source. Further details on the mitigation measures at Newton-with-Scales and Lytham Moss are provided in the revised Outline Ecological Management Plan (OEMP) at Deadline 4.
RI_H53	Please note that comments relating to SSSI sites are included in the sections above.					

7.11 Risk and Issues Log – Fylde MCZ

Table 7-11: Responses to questions regarding the Fylde MCZ

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
Risk and Issues Log Deadline 1 – Fylde MCZ Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets Appendix I - Fylde MCZ						
RI_I1	Up to 3% of the offshore export cables, including cable crossings within Fylde MCZ may require cable protection and this equates to a total of 0.0304km2 (30,400m2/3.04ha) of lasting habitat change/loss within the site. Natural England does not agree with the Applicants conclusion of no likelihood of hindering the conservation objectives of Fylde MCZ. Unless it can be demonstrated otherwise, the nature, scale and duration of impacts from lasting habitats change/loss from the placement of cable protection is likely to hinder the 'maintain' habitat feature conservation objectives of the site. We advise that the MCZ assessment should proceed to a stage 2 assessment and a without prejudice Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) proposal should be produced.		The Applicants' welcome the decision to resolve this issue at Deadline 2. Response to further comments on the Applicants' In-principle MEEB proposal from 'Tab J Benthic Compensation' of the Risk and Issue Log and Appendix J of NE's Deadline 2 submission are provided in Table 2.12 below, and Appendix A.			The Applicants note that RI_I1 was resolved at Deadline 2.
RI_I2	Natural England agrees with the MMO in considering that in order to fully discharge regulatory duties under section 69 (1) of the MCAA, in combination and cumulative effects must be considered. Natural England considers the O&M phase activities for Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets combined with the projects listed in Table 1.21 and on-going Oil and Gas impacts will result in lasting habitat change / physical disturbance which will further hinder the conservation objectives of the Fylde MCZ. We strongly advise that Applicant's potentially affecting the MCZ will need to intensify their use of the mitigation hierarchy.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.45 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014).	No change.		The Applicants' position remains as outlined in the Applicants' response to RR-1601.45 (PDA-014). In accordance with the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1), the MDS for cable protection has been designed in line with the mitigation hierarchy. Under the mitigation hierarchy developers must seek to avoid, reduce and mitigate environmental impacts before considering compensation. Consideration for routing of the offshore export cables in and around designated sites is provided in Section 4.3.2 of Volume 1, Annex 4.2: Selection and refinement of Offshore Infrastructure (APP-032) with the selected route through the Fylde MCZ considered in paragraphs 4.3.2.3 – 4.3.2.6 and 4.4.2.7. As the offshore export cable route passes through the Fylde MCZ, the Applicants reduced the environmental impact from cable protection in line with the mitigation hierarchy as detailed in Table 1.13 within the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) but cannot reduce this further in the absence of more detailed vibrocore / CTP data: • Cable protection for ground conditions within the Fylde MCZ was reduced (from up to 20% at PEIR for the Morgan Offshore Wind Project: Transmission Assets to 3%, from up to 15% at PEIR for the Morecambe Offshore Windfarm: Transmission

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
						Assets to 3% for use as a contingency only). Also, noting the Applicants commitment (CoT54 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments Register of the ES (AS-030)) for cable burial as the preferred option of cable protection and minimum target burial depth of 0.5 m or greater, where possible, being acceptable within the Fylde MCZ to minimise need for external cable protection as detailed in section 3.1.1.7 of the Outline Offshore Cable Specification and Installation Plan (APP-220); and • ; • The offshore export cable route has been designed to minimise the number of crossings with existing cables, and therefore long term habitat loss resulting from cable protection requirements, within the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants have made all possible endeavours to move the cable crossings outside the Fylde MCZ however are restricted by existing infrastructure and engineering constraints (e.g. the need to cross the cable at a 90 degree angle). As such, whilst it was possible to move the Morecambe offshore export cable crossings westward beyond the boundary of the MCZ, the Morgan offshore export cables must cross the Lanis 1 cable within the Fylde MCZ. Therefore the Applicants have sought to reduce the parameters of the crossing, such as length and height, to minimise its impact. • The total potential long term habitat loss from cable protection within the Fylde MCZ was reduced from 0.16 km^2 (0.06% of the Fylde MCZ) at PEIR to 0.03 km^2 (0.012% of the Fylde MCZ). As set out under paragraph 3.1.1.12 of the Outline CSIP (REP2-022) ground conditions within the Fylde MCZ are largely sand and clay with some areas of slightly gravelly seabed. Whilst slightly gravelly clay or slightly gravelly sand sediments are currently not anticipated to hinder cable burial via the trenching techniques under consideration, more dense areas of gravel, if present, could present a risk of reduced burial, leading to the need for cable protection. Based on the initial survey results from four vibrocores / cone penetration tests (CPTs), the use of additional cable protection for ground conditions within the Fylde MCZ is not envisaged. However, due to the limited survey data used to extrapolate seabed conditions across the MCZ, isolated disparate ground conditions could still be present. As such, the MDS allows for 3% cable protection for ground conditions within the Fylde MCZ as a contingency only (CoT47 in the Commitments Register, REP3-013) should later surveys indicate discrete areas of harder seabed where cable burial to the target depth cannot be reached.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
						For the Applicants to not include the 3% contingency would risk a delay to completion of construction to engage on a variation to the deemed marine licence(s) and thus, a potential delay to completing the project and commencing contribution to UK Government targets for renewable energy.. The MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) concluded that cable protection for the Transmission Assets would not affect the conservation objectives of the Fylde MCZ. In regards to the effects upon the Fylde MCZ and the request to provide Without Prejudice Measures of Equivalent Ecological Benefit (MEEB), the Applicants maintain that a Stage 2 MCZ Assessment and MEEB are not required. The Applicants however provided a Stage 2 MCZ Assessment, including a without prejudice, in-principle Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) Plan, at Deadline 1 (REP1-059). Additionally, the Applicants have also provided a without prejudice benthic compensation schedule at Deadline 3 (REP3-066) should the Secretary of State deem it required.
RI_I3	The most recent condition assessment for Fylde MCZ concluded that subtidal sand and subtidal mud were in a favourable condition. Natural England advises that whilst the cable protection is in situ, the extent and distribution attribute of the site features can neither be maintained or restored. Nor can the impacts be considered temporary even if removal is secured at the end of the 35-year project lifespan. Therefore, we advise that the impacts will result in 'lasting' habitat change from mud and sand to hard substrata which may result in habitat loss as removal and/or recovery post removal is not guaranteed. Additionally, we do not agree with the Applicant that in-filling of cable protection with sediment will occur and be sufficient to provide the same structure and function in the impacted area. Unless the Applicant's position changes it is unlikely that there will be agreement between the Applicant and Natural England during examination on this issue. Please see comment I1 on the provision of a without prejudice MEEB case.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.45 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014). The Applicants also provided a Stage 2 MCZ Assessment, including a without prejudice, in-principle Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) Plan, at Deadline 1 (REP1-059). Response to further comments on the Applicants' In-principle MEEB proposal from 'Tab J Benthic Compensation' of the Risk and Issue Log and Appendix J of NE's Deadline 2 submission are provided in Table 2.12 below, and Appendix A.	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_B3. Response to further comments on the Applicants' In-principle MEEB proposal from 'Tab J Benthic Compensation' of the Risk and Issue Log and Appendix J of NE's Deadline 2 submission are provided in Table 8-1 below, and Appendix A.
RI_I4	The Applicant has stated that the requirement for, and potential locations of any cable protection due to ground conditions within the Fylde MCZ are not yet known. Therefore, the MDS figures have assumed that the cable protection material for the cable crossing		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.43 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014) and within RR-1601.I.4 of their response to Natural England – Appendix I (PDA-024).	No change. Please see Tab J for more detail.		Please see the Applicant's response to NE5. Response to further comments on the Applicants' In-principle MEEB proposal from 'Tab J Benthic Compensation' of the Risk and Issue Log and Appendix

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	could occur wholly within either the subtidal sand or subtidal mud features. Therefore, the MDS for long term habitat loss of each of the features have been provided as: Subtidal sand – 0.0304km2 (0.014% of the area of this feature in the MCZ Subtidal mud – 0.0304km2 (0.069% of the area of this feature in the MCZ) Natural England does not agree with this approach. We advise that an accurate MDS and realistic Worst-Case Scenario (WCS) for each feature is presented and assessed for lasting habitat change/loss and updated withing the Application documents. We highlight the importance in providing specific figures to inform the compensation requirements for a without prejudice MEEB.		The Applicants also provided a Stage 2 MCZ Assessment, including a without prejudice, in-principle Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) Plan, at Deadline 1 (REP1-059) which updates the MDS for long term habitat loss of each of the features to account for the cable crossing occurring only within the subtidal mud feature. Response to further comments on the Applicants' In-principle MEEB proposal from 'Tab J Benthic Compensation' of the Risk and Issue Log and Appendix J of NE's Deadline 2 submission are provided in Table 2.12 below, and Appendix A.			J of NE's Deadline 3 submission are provided in Table 8-1 below, and Appendix A.
RI_I5	Natural England disagrees with the Applicant on the scale and significance of the impacts on the interest feature of the Fylde MCZ. Natural England also advises that impacts considered as a percentage of the whole MCZ is misleading given the size of the site. The lasting habitat change/loss impacts from the Transmission Assets combined are still 0.0304 km2/3.04ha from cable protection. We do not consider this amount of lasting habitat change/loss to be small scale. Natural England does not believe that the respective positions are likely to change in relation to scale and significance of the impact to the Fylde MCZ and therefore we provide no further comment unless design parameters change through the examination.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.45 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014). The Applicants' provided a Stage 2 MCZ Assessment, including a without prejudice, in-principle Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) Plan, at Deadline 1 (REP1-059). Response to further comments on the Applicants' In-principle MEEB proposal from 'Tab J Benthic Compensation' of the Risk and Issue Log and Appendix J of NE's Deadline 2 submission are provided in Table 2.12 below, and Appendix A.	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_I4.
RI_I6	Natural England note the commitments; CoT108 and CoT109 from the Applicant that any external cable protection used within the Fylde MCZ will be designed to be removable at decommissioning stage. However, we note that this commitment does not include the action to remove cable protection at the decommissioning phase, only that the protection will be 'removable'. Although some of the cable protection options included within the project description may be removable they are not considered as such from a nature conservation perspective due to further impacts to the designated site features e.g. rock armouring. We advise a commitment to remove all seabed infrastructure at the time of		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.42 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014). The Applicants also updated the outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan and submitted at Deadline 2 (REP2-022), which removed 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within the Fylde MCZ.	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_C5.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
	commissioning both inside and outside of Fylde MCZ should be secured in the DCO.					
RI_I7	Natural England reiterates concerns around the varying construction scenarios proposed by the Applicant. The most impactful to Fylde MCZ would be option 3b (i.e. sequential construction with a gap of up to a maximum of four years between completion of construction of the transmission assets for the first project and commencement of construction for the second project). This is mainly due to the four-year gap which may allow for some recovery of seabed habitats and species from the first works. The Applicant has not considered the potential for recovery and the impact from repeated interventions or the four-year gap, therefore we do not agree that the WCS has fully been assessed.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.I.7 of their response to Natural England – Appendix I (PDA-024).	No change.		Please see the Applicant's response to NE3.
RI_I8	Whilst we welcome the refinement work the Applicant has undertaken, we advise there are further mitigation options which should be explored by the Applicant to minimise impacts on Fylde MCZ and included for consideration in the Application, namely: • Commitments should be made and secured to avoid the most sensitive Priority habitats designated under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2206).This is applicable both within and outside of Fylde MCZ; • Exclusion of the use of jack up vessels within the MCZ; • UXO clearance to be moved outside of the MCZ prior to detonation to avoid impacts to the seabed where possible; • Boulder clearance using a grab not a plough; • Remove all cable and scour protection at the time of decommissioning, both within and outside of Fylde MCZ • Further mitigation measures to be adopted with regards to sediment disposal (I10) • Refining long term habitat loss for subtidal mud and subtidal sand within Fylde MCZ to provide more realistic MDS parameters for habitat loss.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.8 of their response to Natural England – Appendix I (PDA-024).	No change.		The Applicants thank Natural England for their comments on the welcomed refinements made by the Transmissions Assets to date. Please see the Applicants' response to RI-I2 on the application of the mitigation hierarchy within the Fylde MCZ. Additionally, Table 1.15 of the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) outlines how due consideration has been given to the mitigation measures put forward by Natural England in their Section 42 consultation response which have been recommended/adopted for other offshore wind farm projects to reduce impacts to designated sites. • Please see the Applicants' response to comment NE6 regarding the Applicants' position on avoiding NERC priority habitats. • Please see response to RI_C19 and RI_C22 regarding the Applicants' position on jack-up vessels. • Please see response to RI_C19 regarding UXO clearance in the Fyle MCZ. • Please see response to RI_C13 regarding boulder clearance. • Please see response to RI_C5. around decommissioning of infrastructure. • Please see response to RI_C24 regarding sediment disposal. • Please see the Applicants' response to comment RI_I4 regarding the Applicants' position on the long term habitat loss MDS.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
RI_I9	Natural England would welcome further information on dredge and disposal activities with regards to Fylde MCZ. The Application states that disposal activities including sandwave clearance will be conducted throughout the Transmission Assets Order Limits but that no commitments have been proposed to mitigate impacts either within or outside of benthic designated sites. Mitigation options should be adopted and disposal options should be explored to ensure that sediment is deposited in areas of similar sediment character so that the risk of permanently altering the sediment character in any given location is minimised.		The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.44 of their response to Natural England – Appendix A (PDA-014) on the application of the mitigation hierarchy to reduce impacts to the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.31 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017) on commitments relating to disposal activities and priority habitats.	No change.		With regards to Natural England's comments relating to dredge and disposal activities in the Fylde MCZ please see the Applicants' response to RI_C24.
RI_I10	Natural England notes that secondary scouring needs further consideration in the Stage I MCZ Assessment in relation to impacts to sediment transportation.		The Applicants responded previously to this matter raised by Natural England. Information on the cable protection location and design was provided in RR-1601.43 (PDA-014) whilst a detailed response regarding secondary scour was given in R-1601.I.10 (PDA-024). Please also refer to the updated Outline Cable Specification and Installation Plan (REP2-022) and Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description (REP2-008), submitted at Deadline 2.	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to NE5 for information on the cable protection location and design. As outlined previously in the Applicants' response to RR-1601.I.10 (PDA-024), where cable protection measures are required, they will be subject to engineering design to ensure they minimise as much as practical the occurrence of scour which is required in order to provide effective asset security. The exact parameters will be site specific and related to both cable protection type and seabed and hydrographic conditions. Therefore, any residual/secondary scour would be very localised and of negligible magnitude; typically confined to within a few metres of the direct footprint of the scour protection material. Cable protection measures will be tailored to the specific location, noting that installation below the bed level within the cable trench and adjacent seabed sediments may be undertaken to ensure compliance with the commitment to limit change in water depth to 5% (unless otherwise approved by Licensing Authority in consultation with the Maritime Coastguard Agency), (APP-037), CoT45. The Applicants can confirm that the height of the cable protection above the seabed may be altered in relation to the given water depth to adhere to this commitment, ensuring that any cable protection is sufficiently low in profile to cause minimal changes to wave, tide and sediment transport. Secondary scour impacts on features of the Fylde MCZ is assessed in section 1.8.8 of the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) which concludes that any effects would be confined to within a few meters of the direct footprint of that cable protection material. The Applicants also confirm that the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) will be updated and submitted at Deadline 5 to include the update to the MDS for the subtidal mud feature and all relevant new commitments for the Fylde MCZ.

ID	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Status Rel and WR Rep and D1	Applicants comment at Deadline 3	~Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants comment at Deadline 4
RI_I11	Natural England notes that UXO clearance activities are likely to be undertaken within the Fylde MCZ. Natural England continues to advise that UXOs should be detonated outside of Fylde MCZ to avoid the creation of a crater. As a minimum, we advise that further information is required in relation to the depth of any crater and the impacts this may have on the subtidal mud and sand features including any recovery times.		The Applicants responded previously to this matter in RR-1601.B.14 of their response to Natural England – Appendix B (PDA-016) which outlines the MDS for UXO clearance within the Fylde MCZ and the commitments adopted by the Applicants with respect to UXO clearance. The Applicants also confirmed within RR-1601.37 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014) that high order UXO detonation has been removed from the draft DCO (including the DMLs) (REP1-008) at Deadline 1.	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_C19.
RI_I12	We welcome the inclusion of in principal monitoring proposed for benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology in the Offshore In Principal Monitoring Plan (OIPMP). However, the focus seems to be on physical/sediment recovery and lacks sufficient ecological context. Additionally, there is no reference to pre- and post-construction monitoring which is essential to understand and assess recovery. We advise that the rationale within Table 1.3 of the OIPMP needs to be updated to additionally include "temporal and spatial changes in benthic communities and their recoverability….". We also advise that the Applicant provides clarity that monitoring surveys will be undertaken pre- and post-construction and that temporal monitoring over an agreed time period should take place in order to confirm recovery.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.35 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_C27. The Applicants have updated the Offshore In Principle Monitoring Plan (IPMP) submitted at Deadline 4 (J20/F02) to also include a commitment to specific monitoring of the temporal and spatial recovery of benthic communities in the Fylde MCZ through pre and post construction benthic community sampling and of the potential colonisation by Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) following construction activities within the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants will update the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) for submission at Deadline 5 to include all additional commitments relevant to the MCZ.
RI_I13	Natural England notes that within the Outline O&M plan there is the intention to use the cable protection allowance over the lifetime of the project. However, this is not aligned with Natural England position on cable protection. We advise that post construction and an agreed snagging time a new marine licence would be required for the placement of further cable protection within Fylde MCZ. Natural England advises that the Applicant refines the O&M requirements to be align with the SNCB and regulatory position on this.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.A.9 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014) and RR-1601.C. 2 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017).	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_C2.

7.12 Risk and Issue Log – Benthic Compensation

Table 7-12: Responses to questions regarding Benthic Compensation

ID / Appendix J reference	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Deadline 2	Applicants' response at Deadline 3	Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants' response at Deadline 4
Risk and Issues Log Deadline 1 – Benthic Compensation Taken from Natural England's Relevant and Written Representations Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets Appendix J - Benthic Compensation						
Compensation measure: Strategic Compensation - New site designation or Extension for Subtidal Sand and Subtidal Mud						
RI_J1 / J3	NE does not agree with the approach taken to determine the total WCS for lasting habitat loss. The approach taken assumes that cable protection requirements could occur wholly within either the subtidal sand or subtidal mud feature. In order for us to agree the impact, the habitat loss for each feature should be calculated then summed to provide the total area of habitat loss.		The Applicants responded previously to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.43 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014) and within RR-1601.I.4 of their response to Natural England – Appendix I (PDA-024). The Applicants' provided a Stage 2 MCZ Assessment, including a without prejudice, in-principle Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) Plan, at Deadline 1 (REP1-059) which updated the maximum design scenario (MDS) for long term habitat loss of each of the features to account for the cable crossing occurring only within the subtidal mud feature. As set out in the Outline Offshore Cable Specification and Installation Plan (CSIP) (REP2-022) as part of the detailed design process pre-construction survey data will be used to inform the final routing of the cables, any micro-siting requirements and areas where there is a higher risk of remedial works such as external cable protection. At this stage in the consenting process, however, the Applicants are unable to refine the assumptions further with respect to where cable protection for ground conditions will be required in the Fylde MCZ (if any is required at all).	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_I4. The Applicants' provided a Stage 2 MCZ Assessment, including a without prejudice, in-principle Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) Plan, at Deadline 1 (REP1-059) which updated the maximum design scenario (MDS) for long term habitat loss of each of the features to account for the cable crossing occurring only within the subtidal mud feature. As set out in the Outline Offshore Cable Specification and Installation Plan (CSIP) (REP2-022) as part of the detailed design process pre-construction survey data will be used to inform the final routing of the cables, any micro-siting requirements and areas where there is a higher risk of remedial works such as external cable protection. At this stage in the consenting process, however, the Applicants are unable to refine the assumptions further with respect to where cable protection for ground conditions will be required in the Fylde MCZ (if any is required at all). The Applicants will update the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) to include the updated MDS for long term habitat loss of each of the features to account for the cable crossing occurring only within the subtidal mud feature for submission at Deadline 5.
RI_J2 / J4	Due to potential uncertainties with the delivery mechanisms and timeframes for successful delivery of the measure, further discussions are required in relation to individual project contributions and compensatory ratios which may be required.		The Applicants welcome this response and have engaged in post-application/pre-examination consultation with Natural England regarding the MEEB for the Fylde MCZ and would welcome further discussions with Natural England and Defra, as the future Marine Recovery Fund (MRF) operator, in relation to individual project contributions and compensatory ratios which may be required for the Transmission Assets. Natural England's guidance regarding the delivery of MEEB, as outlined in their comments on the Applicants' response to Natural England's Relevant/Written Representations REP2-062), were taken in to account by the Applicants in the development of the Stage 2	No change.		The Applicants welcome this response and have engaged in post-application/pre-examination consultation with Natural England regarding the MEEB for the Fylde MCZ and would welcome further discussions with Natural England and Defra, as the future Marine Recovery Fund (MRF) operator, in relation to individual project contributions and compensatory ratios which may be required for the Transmission Assets. Natural England's guidance regarding the delivery of MEEB, as outlined in their comments on the Applicants' response to Natural England's Relevant/Written Representations REP2-062), were taken in to account by the Applicants in the

ID / Appendix J reference	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Deadline 2	Applicants' response at Deadline 3	Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants' response at Deadline 4
			MCZ Assessment (REP1-059). As outlined in the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059), the Applicants and Natural England are in agreement that strategic compensation measures, in the form of a payment into the Marine Recovery Fund (MRF) to access Defra's programme of MPA designations/extensions, are likely to be the preferred and best method for the delivery of MEEB for the Fylde MCZ (should MEEB be required). Regarding individual project contribution and compensatory ratios, as outlined in Section A.1.7.3 of the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059), the Applicants understand the ratio of MEEB to impact will be determined by Defra in consultation with SNCBs and will be used to determine the size of the monetary contribution made by the Applicants. The Applicants have submitted the document Without Prejudice Benthic Compensation DCO Schedule (S_D3_9) that could be included in the DCO should it be concluded that benthic compensation was required. The drafting would secure the relevant measures set out in the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059). The Applicants had regard to the wording provided by Natural England when drafting the without prejudice schedule.			development of the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059). As outlined in the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059), the Applicants and Natural England are in agreement that strategic compensation measures, in the form of a payment into the MRF to access Defra's programme of MPA designations/extensions, will be the preferred and best method for the delivery of MEEB for the Fylde MCZ (should MEEB be required). Regarding individual project contribution and compensatory ratios, as outlined in Section A.1.7.3 of the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059), the Applicants understand the ratio of MEEB to impact will be determined by Defra in consultation with SNCBs and will be used to determine the size of the monetary contribution made by the Applicants. The Applicants have submitted the document Without Prejudice Benthic Compensation DCO Schedule at Deadline 3 (REP3-066) that could be included in the DCO should it be concluded that benthic compensation was required. The drafting would secure the relevant measures set out in the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059). The Applicants had regard to the wording provided by Natural England when drafting the without prejudice schedule. The Applicants have also updated the Commitments Register at Deadline 4 (see CoT136, F1.5.3/F05), to include a clear commitment that, should benthic compensation be required, the Marine Recovery Fund (MRF) will be the preferred and prioritised option and the project-led options would only be considered where the MRF option is not made available to the Applicants. The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) and the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) for submission at Deadline 5 to include reference to this new commitment.
RI_J3 / J5	Natural England recognises that there are likely to be time lags between impact occurring and compensation achieving the desired outcomes. We would wish to see the project contribution to the measure to be such that it ensures an overall environmental net positive outcome for the impacted feature over the lifetime of the project.		The Applicants acknowledge that Natural England have provided this comment as a note for the Examiners and/or the competent authority and would note the response provided by the Applicants to RI_J2 & J4 with regards to the project contributions that may be required to secure MEEB (should MEEB be required). The Applicants understand the ratio of MEEB to impact will be determined by Defra in consultation with SNCBs and will be used to determine the size of the monetary contribution made by the Applicants. As outlined in Section A.1.7.2 of the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059), the creation of the MRF is under the scope of Part 13 of the Energy Act 2023,			The Applicants note that this issue was resolved at Deadline 2.

ID / Appendix J reference	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Deadline 2	Applicants' response at Deadline 3	Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants' response at Deadline 4
			however it has yet to be set up for England or Wales although it is anticipated to be introduced in late 2025 (UK Parliament, 2025). UK Parliament 2020 also states that although Defra has already begun work on this, the timelines of some projects mean that they will still be delayed if they are required to wait for MPA designations and associated management to be functioning. Where this is the case, the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ) Secretary of State and the MMO may consider circumstances where the adverse effect can occur before compensation is in place. Where this is permitted, the Applicants understand that a greater amount of environmental compensation is likely to be needed to make up for the time delay and developers will be required to pay into the MRF before any adverse effect can occur. Natural England have however confirmed that for the Transmission Assets, in-principle it should be possible for the impacts from the Transmission Assets to occur before strategic compensation is in place provided the Applicants state they are committed to strategic compensation.			
RI_J4 / J6	The location of the measure is still under consideration by DEFRA, NE and JNCC and as yet nothing has been agreed and/or secured. There is likely to be consultation on potential locations during the examination.		The Applicants acknowledge that Natural England have provided this comment as a note for the Examiners and/or the competent authority. The Applicants would however highlight that, as outlined Section A.1.7.2 of the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059), the location of the MPA extension/designation will be determined by Defra as the MRF operator. Ultimately the evidence base and decision-making process for choosing the MEEB location(s) will be outlined by Defra. As outlined in the Applicants' response to RI_J2 & J4 above, the Applicants would welcome further discussions with Natural England and Defra, as the future MRF operator, on potential locations.			The Applicants note that this issue was resolved at Deadline 2.
RI_J5 / J7	Long Term implementation is still under consideration by DEFRA, NE and JNCC and as yet nothing has been agreed and/or secured.		The Applicants acknowledge that Natural England have provided this comment as a note for the Examiners and/or the competent authority and understand that long term implementation is still under consideration by Defra, Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). The Applicants would welcome any further updates by Natural England during the course of the examination.			The Applicants note that this issue was resolved at Deadline 2.
RI_J6 / J8	Success criteria/Ability to prove additionality is still under consideration by DEFRA, NE and JNCC and as yet nothing has been agreed and/or secured.		The Applicants acknowledge that Natural England have provided this comment as a note for the Examiners and/or the competent authority and understand that the success criteria/ability to prove additionality is still under consideration by Defra, Natural England and the JNCC. The Applicants would welcome any further updates by Natural England during the course of the examination.			The Applicants note that this issue was resolved at Deadline 2.
Compensation measure: Biogenic Reef - Native Oyster						

ID / Appendix J reference	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Deadline 2	Applicants' response at Deadline 3	Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants' response at Deadline 4
RI_J7 / J10	Natural England advises that reef creation/enhancement is not considered to provide comparable ecological function and is therefore not an appropriate measure for subtidal sand and subtidal mud systems within Fylde MCZ and provide no further comment on this as a potential measure.		The Applicants note this comment and would highlight that, as outlined in the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059), should the Secretary of State determine that MEEB be required for the Transmission Assets, Natural England and the Applicants are in agreement that strategic compensation measures are likely to be the preferred and best method for the delivery of MEEB for the Fylde MCZ. In line with other projects currently going through examination (e.g. Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm and Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind (Generating Station)), the Applicants have, however, also explored a longlist of potential project-led MEEB options. As outlined in Section A.1.7.3 of the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059), whilst the Applicants acknowledge that native oyster bed creation would not provide like-for-like compensation for subtidal sand and subtidal mud, the Applicants have outlined their reasons for why they consider that native oyster beds could provide a comparable ecological function (e.g. as native oyster reefs are known to provide shelter and food for juvenile fish). The Applicants would note that project-led measures have not been fully defined/developed further on the basis of feedback provided by Natural England at the meeting on 12 February 2025 during which Natural England stated that they were not requesting a long list of project-led MEEB measures and neither would they comment on it. The Applicants note that Natural England have confirmed this position in their comments in J6 and J7 above.	No change.		The Applicants note this comment and would highlight that, as outlined in the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059), should the Secretary of State determine that MEEB be required for the Transmission Assets, Natural England and the Applicants are in agreement that strategic compensation measures are likely to be the preferred and best method for the delivery of MEEB for the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants have updated the Commitments Register at Deadline 4 (F1.5.3/F05), to include a clear commitment that, should benthic compensation be required, the Marine Recovery Fund (MRF) will be the preferred and prioritised option and the project-led options would only be considered where the MRF option is not made available to the Applicants (see CoT136). In line with other projects currently going through examination (e.g. Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm and Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind (Generating Station)), the Applicants have, however, also explored a longlist of potential project-led MEEB options. As outlined in Section A.1.7.3 of the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059), whilst the Applicants acknowledge that native oyster bed creation would not provide like-for-like compensation for subtidal sand and subtidal mud, the Applicants have outlined their reasons for why they consider that native oyster beds could provide a comparable ecological function (e.g. as native oyster reefs are known to provide shelter and food for juvenile fish). The Applicants would note that project-led measures have not been fully defined/developed further on the basis of feedback provided by Natural England at the meeting on 12 February 2025 during which Natural England stated that they were not requesting a long list of project-led MEEB measures and neither would they comment on it. The Applicants note that Natural England have confirmed this position in their comments in RI_J6 / J8 and RI_J5 / J7 above.
Compensation measure: Bivalve Seeding inside MCZ						
RI_J8 / J11	It remains unclear what additionally this measure would provide and therefore NE questions this as being compensation for lasting habitat loss/change to subtidal sand and subtidal mud. In addition, the seeding of bivalves is associated with biogenic reef communities on mixed sediment and not subtidal sand and subtidal mud.		Please see the Applicants response to RI_J7 & J10 for the Applicants' position on strategic compensation measures as the preferred and best method for the delivery of MEEB for the Fylde MCZ. As outlined in Section A.1.7.3 of the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059), whilst the Applicants acknowledge that bivalve seeding within the Fylde MCZ would not provide like-for-like compensation for subtidal sand and subtidal mud, the Applicants have outlined their reasons for why they consider that bivalve seeding could provide a comparable ecological function (e.g. bivalves are key component of the community within the	No change.		Please see the Applicants response to RI_J7 & J10 for the Applicants' position on strategic compensation measures as the preferred and best method for the delivery of MEEB for the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants have updated the Commitments Register at Deadline 4 (F1.5.3/F05), to include a clear commitment that, should benthic compensation be required, the Marine Recovery Fund (MRF) will be the preferred and prioritised option and the project-led options would only be considered where the MRF option is not made available to the Applicants (see CoT136).

ID / Appendix J reference	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Deadline 2	Applicants' response at Deadline 3	Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants' response at Deadline 4
			Fylde MCZ and a key food resource for juvenile fish and therefore improving their population numbers could potentially improve this function within the Fylde MCZ). As outlined in the Applicants' response to RI_J7 & J10, this measure has not been developed further at this stage following the advice from that Natural England that they do not believe there is merit in further progressing project-led compensation measures at this time.			As outlined in Section A.1.7.3 of the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059), whilst the Applicants acknowledge that bivalve seeding within the Fylde MCZ would not provide like-for-like compensation for subtidal sand and subtidal mud, the Applicants have outlined their reasons for why they consider that bivalve seeding could provide a comparable ecological function (e.g. bivalves are key component of the community within the Fylde MCZ and a key food resource for juvenile fish and therefore improving their population numbers could potentially improve this function within the Fylde MCZ). As outlined in the Applicants' response to RI_J7 & J10, this measure has not been developed further at this stage following the advice from that Natural England that they do not believe there is merit in further progressing project-led compensation measures at this time.
Compensation measure: Bivalve Seeding outside of designated sites						
RI_J9 / J12	Given the legislative changes that would be required, Natural England does not consider this option is viable within the Project's timeframe. If the Applicant wishes to pursue this there will need to be agreement from The Crown Estate for a seabed lease and management measures put into place.		The Applicants note Natural England's comments and would highlight their response to RI_J7 & J10 confirming the Applicants' position on strategic compensation measures as the preferred and best method for the delivery of MEEB for the Fylde MCZ.	No change.		The Applicants note Natural England's comments and would highlight their response to RI_J7 & J10 confirming the Applicants' position on strategic compensation measures as the preferred and best method for the delivery of MEEB for the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants have updated the Commitments Register at Deadline 4 (F1.5.3/F05), to include a clear commitment that, should benthic compensation be required, the Marine Recovery Fund (MRF) will be the preferred and prioritised option and the project-led options would only be considered where the MRF option is not made available to the Applicants (see CoT136).
RI_J10 / J13	Natural England does not agree with the approach taken to determine the total WCS for lasting habitat loss. The approach taken assumes that cable protection requirements could occur wholly within either the subtidal sand or subtidal mud feature.		Please see the Applicants response to RI_J1 & J3 above.	No change.		Please see the Applicants response to RI_J1 & J3 above.
RI_J11 / J14	The scale/extent of the measure has not been presented in detail and/or agreed with Natural England, JNCC or DEFRA.		The Applicants note Natural England's comments and would highlight their response to RI_J7 & J10 confirming the Applicants' position on strategic compensation measures as the preferred and best method for the delivery of MEEB for the Fylde MCZ. In line with other projects currently going through examination, the Applicants have, however, also explored a longlist of potential project-led MEEB options, as the details of the MRF are not yet finalised.	No change.		The Applicants note Natural England's comments and would highlight their response to RI_J7 & J10 confirming the Applicants' position on strategic compensation measures as the preferred and best method for the delivery of MEEB for the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants have updated the Commitments Register at Deadline 4 (F1.5.3/F05), to include a clear commitment that, should benthic compensation be required, the Marine Recovery Fund (MRF) is the

ID / Appendix J reference	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Deadline 2	Applicants' response at Deadline 3	Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants' response at Deadline 4
			The Applicants acknowledge that in the event that Natural England and the Applicants' position changes, and project-led measures must be pursued, the Applicants would be required to provide further detail on these measures.			preferred and prioritised option and the project-led options would only be considered where the MRF option is not made available to the Applicants (see CoT136).. In line with other projects currently going through examination, the Applicants have, however, also explored a longlist of potential project-led MEEB options, as the details of the MRF are not yet finalised. The Applicants acknowledge that in the event that Natural England and the Applicants' position changes, and project-led measures must be pursued, the Applicants would be required to provide further detail on these measures.
RI_J12 / J15	We do not believe that this measure will be available in the project timeframes.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_J11 & J14 above.	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_J11 & J14 above.
RI_J13 / J16	The location of the measure has not been presented in detail and/or agreed with TCE, Natural England, JNCC or DEFRA.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_J11 & J14 above.	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_J11 & J14 above.
RI_J14 / J17, J18	There is a requirement for changes in legislation for the delivery of this measure and therefore until that is secured, further long-term implementation and success criteria remains unknown.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_J11 & J14 above.	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_J11 & J14 above.
RI_J15 / J19	We do not believe that is currently suitable as a sole or part measure at this time.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_J11 & J14 above.	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_J11 & J14 above.
Compensation measure: Seagrass habitat creation/restoration						
RI_J16 / J20	Natural England advises that seagrass restoration is a lower preference measure compared to those supporting the same ecological function of the habitat being compensated for.' Natural England also highlights that seagrass is not a feature of subtidal mud and further advice on this measure should be read in this light.		The Applicants acknowledge that Natural England have provided this comment as a note for the Examiners and/or the competent authority but would highlight their response to RI_J7 & J10 that should the Secretary of State determine that MEEB be required, Natural England and the Applicants are in agreement that strategic compensation measures are likely to be the preferred and best method for the delivery of MEEB for the Fylde MCZ. As outlined in Section A.1.7.3 of the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059), whilst the Applicants acknowledge that seagrass habitat creation/restoration would not provide like-for-like compensation for subtidal sand and subtidal mud, the Applicants have outlined their reasons for why they consider that this measure could provide a comparable ecological function. The Applicants acknowledge that in the event that Natural			The Applicants note that this issue was resolved at Deadline 2.

ID / Appendix J reference	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Deadline 2	Applicants' response at Deadline 3	Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants' response at Deadline 4
			England and the Applicants' position changes, and project-led measures must be pursued, the Applicants would be required to provide further detail on these measures. As outlined in the Applicants' response to RI_J7 & J10 above, this measure has not been developed further at this stage following the advice from that Natural England that they do not believe there is merit in further progressing project-led compensation measures at this time.			
RI_J17 / J21	Natural England has significant concerns about the deliverability of seagrass restoration, even on a small scale as there have been no long term successes with seagrass restoration in the UK. Subtidal seagrass restoration should only be a minor part of a wider package in terms of the required compensation. It could be retained to supplement other measures, or potentially as an adaptive management response.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_J16 & J20 above.	No change.		The Applicants note Natural England's comments and would highlight their response to RI_J7 & J10 confirming the Applicants' position on strategic compensation measures as the preferred and best method for the delivery of MEEB for the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants have updated the Commitments Register at Deadline 4 (F1.5.3/F05), to include a clear commitment that, should benthic compensation be required, the Marine Recovery Fund (MRF) will be the preferred and prioritised option and the project-led options would only be considered where the MRF option is not made available to the Applicants (see CoT136).
RI_J18 / J22	NE does not agree with the approach taken to determine the total WCS for lasting habitat loss. The approach taken assumes that cable protection requirements could occur wholly within either the subtidal sand or subtidal mud feature. In order for us to agree the impact, the habitat loss for each feature should be calculated then summed to provide the total area of habitat loss.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_J16 & J20 above.	No change.		The Applicants note Natural England's comments and would highlight their response to RI_J7 & J10 confirming the Applicants' position on strategic compensation measures as the preferred and best method for the delivery of MEEB for the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants have updated the Commitments Register at Deadline 4 (F1.5.3/F05), to include a clear commitment that, should benthic compensation be required, the Marine Recovery Fund (MRF) will be the preferred and prioritised option and the project-led options would only be considered where the MRF option is not made available to the Applicants (see CoT136).
RI_J19 / J23	The scale/extent of the measure has not been presented in detail and/or agreed with the SNCBs.		The Applicants acknowledge that Natural England have provided this comment as a note for the Examiners and/or the competent authority. Please see the Applicants response to RI_J16 & J20 above.			The Applicants note that this issue was resolved at Deadline 2.
RI_J20 / J24	It is unclear if this measure can be delivered prior to the impacts occurring.		The Applicants acknowledge that Natural England have provided this comment as a note for the Examiners and/or the competent authority. Please see the Applicants response to RI_J16 & J20 above.			The Applicants note that this issue was resolved at Deadline 2.
RI_J21 / J25	The location of the measure has not been presented in detail and/or agreed with the SNCBs.		The Applicants acknowledge that Natural England have provided this comment as a note for the Examiners and/or the competent authority. Please see the Applicants response to RI_J16 & J20 above.			The Applicants note that this issue was resolved at Deadline 2.

ID / Appendix J reference	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Deadline 2	Applicants' response at Deadline 3	Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants' response at Deadline 4
	More detail is required to address our concerns.					
RI_J22 / J26, J27	Long term implementation and Success/Ability to prove additionality is yet to be considered in detail and agreed with the SNCBs. More detail is required to address our concerns.		The Applicants acknowledge that Natural England have provided this comment as a note for the Examiners and/or the competent authority. Please see the Applicants response to RI_J16 & J20 above.			The Applicants note that this issue was resolved at Deadline 2.
RI_J23 / J28	Natural England advises that this measure could only be considered as part of a package providing <10% of the required compensation and/or potential adaptive management for part delivered compensation. There would also be a requirement for the provision of subtidal seagrass, not intertidal.		The Applicants acknowledge that Natural England have provided this comment as a note for the Examiners and/or the competent authority. Please see the Applicants response to RI_J16 & J20 above.			The Applicants note that this issue was resolved at Deadline 2.
Detailed comments **Documents used: [REP1-059] Stage 2 MCZ Assessment**						
RI_J24 / J29	It is unclear why terrestrial issues have been included in the document. NE advises that there should be MEEB for each designated site.		Onshore aspects of the project, including the onshore export cable corridor and onshore substations, have only been described within Section A.1.1.2.1 of the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059) in order to provide an overview of all project infrastructure for completeness. The Applicants can confirm that there are no onshore elements of the Transmission Assets which are relevant to the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-018) or the Stage 2 Assessment Report (REP1-059). All potentially impacted designated sites were identified, screened and assessed in the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-018), and all relevant MCZs (i.e. the Fylde MCZ alone) have been considered with respect to MEEB, in the Stage 2 Assessment Report (REP1-059).			The Applicants note that this issue has been categorised as yellow at Deadline 3 and so Natural England will not make further comment on the matter at subsequent deadlines, unless specifically requested to through ExA Questions.
RI_J25 / J30	Natural England doesn't agree with the Applicant in relation to small scale losses not hindering the conservation objectives of the MCZ. We refer the ExA to Appendix C Annex A of our relevant/written representation [RR-1601]. It is unlikely that either Applicant's or Natural England position on this will change during examination.		The Applicants acknowledge that Natural England have provided this comment as a note for the Examiners and/or the competent authority. The Applicants would however highlight the response the Applicants provided to RR-1601.45 (PDA-014) which outlines the steps the Applicants have taken to minimise the impact of the Transmission Assets on the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants provided a Stage 2 MCZ Assessment, including a without prejudice, in-principle Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) Plan, at Deadline 1 (REP1-059).			The Applicants note that this issue was resolved at Deadline 2.
RI_J26 / J32	Natural England advises that lasting habitat change/loss can only be considered if removed at		The Applicants have responded to this point in full in the Applicants' response to RR-1601.42 (PDA-014). The Outline CSIP (APP220) identifies that cable burial is the	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_C5.

ID / Appendix J reference	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Deadline 2	Applicants' response at Deadline 3	Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants' response at Deadline 4
	the time of decommissioning. After that timeframe it becomes a permanent impact. We advise that commitments should be made to ensure removal.		preferred option for cable protection where practicable (CoT54) and should cable protection be required within the Fylde MCZ, it will be designed to be removable (CoT108) with the requirement for removal agreed with stakeholders and regulators at the time of decommissioning (CoT109). The Applicants would also highlight the updated Outline CSIP submitted at Deadline 2 (REP2-022), which has removed 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within the Fylde MCZ in acknowledgment that this is the least recoverable type of protection.			
RI_J27 / J33	Natural England advises that even where the conservation objectives are set to 'maintain', lasting habitats change/loss would not maintain the extent and distribution of the features; thus hindering them. This would lead to a restore conservation objective being set which can't be achieved whilst the cable protection is in situ, therefore we advise that MEEB is required.		See the Applicants response to RI_J25 & J30 and RI_J26 & J32 above.	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_I4.
RI_J28 / J34	DESNZ guidance on the MRF agrees with the Applicant that there is likely to be a time lag between impacts occurring and the delivery of the compensation. Therefore, allowances will be included in the MRF process for this.		The Applicants welcome this comment and acknowledge that Natural England have provided this comment as a note for the Examiners and/or the competent authority. The Applicants will incorporate any further information regarding the working processes of the MRF in to the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059) should they become available during the course of the examination.			The Applicants note that this issue was resolved at Deadline 2.
RI_J29 / J35	The EIA lifespan is 35 years. Therefore Natural England doesn't consider the impacts to be temporary, given that the features extent and distribution will be hindered. Likely leading to changes in other attributes. It is unlikely that either Applicant's or Natural England position on this will change during examination.		The Applicants acknowledge that Natural England have provided this comment as a note for the Examiners and/or the competent authority but would highlight that they have responded to this point in full in the Applicants' response to RR-1601.I.3 (PDA-024). The Applicants would also highlight the updated outline CSIP submitted at Deadline 2 (REP2-022), which has removed 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within the Fylde MCZ in acknowledgment that this is the least recoverable type of protection.			The Applicants note that this issue was resolved at Deadline 2.
RI_J30 / J36	Natural England highlights those consents dating back to 2000 pre-date the MCZ designation and is therefore considered part of the baseline. We advise that the existing cable is not a material consideration in any decision making.		The Applicants acknowledge that Natural England have provided this comment as a note for the Examiners and/or the competent authority but would highlight that the Isle of Man Interconnector 1 was included in the cumulative assessment of the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-018) as the maintenance licence, which was issued in 2018, included the potential for the installation of concrete mattresses within the Fylde MCZ (designated in 2016). The Isle of Man Interconnector 1 is included in the			The Applicants note that this issue was resolved at Deadline 2.

ID / Appendix J reference	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Deadline 2	Applicants' response at Deadline 3	Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants' response at Deadline 4
			Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059) as part of the baseline however the maintenance licence extends to 2033 which overlaps with the construction and operation and maintenance phases of the Transmission Assets creating the potential for a cumulative impact and is assessed as such in the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-018).			
RI_J31 / J37	As written there is no differentiation between impacts to subtidal sand or subtidal mud except at the cable crossing which is known to be subtidal mud. We advise that unless the lasting habitat loss for the two features can be differentiated then it is likely that compensation will be required for 30,400m2 of subtidal mud, plus 26,400m2 of subtidal sand. We advise that this needs to be clearer.		See the Applicants response to RI_J1 & J3 above.	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_J1 / J3.
RI_J32 / J38	CoT 109: Natural England advises that it is not sufficient as mitigation. This mitigation measure should be considered further by the Applicant and removal of cable protection should be agreed now as part of a decommissioning plan.		See the Applicants response to RI_J26 & J32 above.	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_C5. .
RI_J33 / J39	Natural England advises that the mitigation measure in CoT 116 is not sufficient in relation to sandwave levelling. Further commitments should be included such as the deposition of any sediment from sandwave levelling within the MCZ is placed adjacent to the levelling, in similar sediment and upstream of the sandwave to facilitate recovery.		Please see the Applicants response to RR-1601.C.31 (PDA-017) which outlines how the Applicants will ensure that any material arising from sandwave clearance within the Transmission Assets Order Limits will be deposited in close proximity to the works including within the Fylde MCZ. The Outline CSIP (APP-220) indicates that ploughing, jetting or mechanical cutting will be used to install the offshore cables (section 6.2) whereby sediment is disturbed into the water column by the jetting or cutting trencher and then allowed to naturally settle back onto and around the cable in the immediately adjacent area. The Applicants note that it is not in their interests to move the sediment further than necessary from its original location and, therefore, consider that the Outline CSIP and existing commitment (CoT116) should be sufficient to provide Natural England with the necessary comfort that sediment will be deposited in areas of similar sediment character.	No change.		Please see the Applicants' response to RI_C24.
RI_J34 / J40	Natural England advises that the mitigation measure is CoT 117 is considered further by the Applicant. The use of Jack Up		The Applicants have previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.25 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017). The Applicants have sought to limit the requirement for	No change.		The Applicants have previously responded to the points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.C.25 of their response to Natural England – Appendix C (PDA-017). The Applicants have sought

ID / Appendix J reference	Risk and Issue Log comment	RAG Deadline 2	Applicants' response at Deadline 3	Consultation, actions, progression	RAG Deadline 3	Applicants' response at Deadline 4
	Vessels (JUVs) should be avoided in the MCZ due to potential leg depressions.		jack-up vessel deployments within the Fylde MCZ where feasible and have refined the MDS as a far as possible. The Applicants will continue to explore the alternatives to the use of jack-up vessels in the Fylde MCZ. The use of and locations of jack-ups will be further evaluated and considered post-consent in the detailed CSIP(s), following further post-consent and pre-construction surveys, secured as part of the detailed Construction Method Statement(s) (CMSs).			to limit the requirement for jack-up vessel deployments within the Fylde MCZ where feasible and have refined the MDS as a far as possible. The Applicants will continue to explore the alternatives to the use of jack-up vessels in the Fylde MCZ. The use of and locations of jack-ups will be further evaluated and considered post-consent in the detailed CSIP(s), following further post-consent and pre-construction surveys, secured as part of the detailed Construction Method Statement(s) (CMSs). The Applicants will update Volume 2, Chapter 2: Benthic subtidal and intertidal ecology (APP-045) and the MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) for submission at Deadline 5 to include further justification to support the predicted infilling of depressions.
RI_J35 / J41	Natural England advises that we do not believe that there are further measures within the long list of measures that could be taken forward at the project level that would provide the necessary MEEB.		The Applicants note this response and can confirm that should the Secretary of State determine that MEEB be required for the Transmission Assets, Natural England and the Applicants are in agreement that strategic compensation measures are likely to be the preferred and best method for the delivery of MEEB for the Fylde MCZ.			The Applicants note that this issue was resolved at Deadline 2.

8 References

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Appendix A: Response to Appendix J2 Stage 2 MCZ assessment and without prejudice Measure of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) for Fylde Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)

Table 8-1: Stage 2 MCZ assessment and without prejudice Measure of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) for Fylde Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)

Ref. No.	Natural England's Advice	Applicants' response at Deadline 3
J1	**Natural England's position on the Transmission Assets Impacts to Fylde MCZ** Natural England submitted our Relevant/Written Representations (RR/WR) to the Planning Inspectorate on 27 January 2025 [RR-1601]. Part of our response included detailed comments and recommendation on impacts to Fylde MCZ. In summary, Natural England does not agree with the conclusion of no likelihood of hindering the conservation objectives of the Fylde MCZ, which has been designated for subtidal sand and subtidal mud. Unless it can be demonstrated otherwise, the nature, scale and duration of impacts from lasting habitats change/loss from the placement of cable protection is likely to hinder the 'maintain' habitat feature conservation objectives of the site. Natural England advised the Applicant that the MCZ assessment should proceed to a Stage 2 assessment and provide a without prejudice MEEB case.	The Applicants have responded previously to these points raised by Natural England within RR-1601.45 of their response to Natural England (PDA-014). The Applicants' MCZ Screening and Stage 1 Assessment Report (APP-019) concluded that cable protection for the Transmission Assets would not affect the conservation objectives of the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants, however, provided a Stage 2 MCZ Assessment, including a without prejudice, in-principle Measures of Equivalent Environmental Benefit (MEEB) Plan, at Deadline 1 (REP1-059). The Applicants would also draw attention to the updated outline CSIP submitted at Deadline 2 (REP2-022), which has removed 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within the Fylde MCZ.
J2	**Natural England's position on MEEB options for Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets** Natural England highlights that the progression of strategic compensation has come about due to the extreme difficulties in delivering project specific benthic compensation. At this stage, Natural England does not believe that there is merit in the Applicant progressing and/or placing reliance upon project specific benthic compensation measures for this project. In the call with the Applicant on 12 February 2025 the strategic compensation option was discussed in detail and the process required to adopt this approach, namely utilising the Marine Recovery Fund (MRF). Natural England highlights the Ministerial Statement issued on 21 January 2025 which confirmed DEFRA's support for delivery of strategic benthic compensation, making wider compensation measures available and delivery of compensation through the Marine Recovery Fund. Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament DESNZ also issued interim guidance on the MRF. The guidance will provide developers with a means to access MPA designation as a compensation measure, prior to the launch of the MRF. The interim guidance also provides advice to developers in planning who are developing their own avian compensation packages on how to ensure that their consent documents include the option to switch to sourcing their avian compensation through the Marine Recovery Fund when it is in place. Strategic compensation measures for offshore wind activities: Marine Recovery Fund interim guidance - GOV.UK Additionally Natural England's response to ExA question ME. 1.10 for Five Estuaries provides some additional information EN010115-000899-Natural England - Responses to ExQ1.pdf relating to compensatory measures. On Monday 10th February Natural England provided by email to the Applicant a word document outlining the draft standard conditions schedule which should be secured within the DCO/dMLs. This is applicable for standard benthic compensation conditions for strategic compensation. This has also been sent out to other projects e.g. Five Estuaries.	Please see the Applicants response to RI_J7 & J10 confirming that Natural England and the Applicants are in agreement that, should the Secretary of State determine that MEEB be required for the Transmission Assets, strategic compensation measures are likely to be the preferred and best method for the delivery of MEEB for the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants can confirm that the interim DESNZ guidance and the Ministerial Statement issued on 21 January 2025, highlighted by Natural England, were used to inform the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059). Regarding the Natural England point on benthic compensation, the Applicants have submitted the document Without Prejudice Benthic Compensation DCO Schedule (S_D3_9) that could be included in the DCO should it be concluded that benthic compensation was required. The drafting would secure the relevant measures set out in the Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059). The Applicants had regard to the wording provided by Natural England when drafting the Without Prejudice Benthic Compensation DCO Schedule (S_D3_9).

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J3	**Maximum Design Scenario/ Impact Parameters** Natural England previously raised in our RR/WRs ([RR-1601], comment ref: I4) that we do not agree with the approach the Applicant has taken in the ES to determine the MDS for lasting habitats change/loss due to the placement of cable protection. The approach taken assumed that MDS for cable protection requirements could occur wholly within either the subtidal mud or sand feature. We advised that an accurate MDS and realistic Worst-Case Scenario (WCS) for each feature should be presented and highlighted the importance of providing this information to inform compensation requirements for MEEB. We acknowledge and welcome further reduction to the MDS for lasting habitat change/loss of the subtidal sand feature, as presented in Section A1.6.3 [REP1-059] which is due to the removal of a cable crossing within the subtidal sand feature. However we note that the approach taken to determine the MDS within this document still assumes that cable protection requirements could occur wholly within either the subtidal sand or subtidal mud feature. The updated MDS for lasting habitat change/loss of each of the features have been provided as: • Total: 30,400m^2 (0.01% of the total 260km2 MCZ area); • Subtidal sand 26,400m^2 (reduced by 4,000m^2 due to the removal of a cable crossing in this feature) (0.01% of the area of this feature in the MCZ); and • Subtidal mud: 30,400m^2 (0.07% of the area of this feature in the MCZ). Without this refinement, there would be an expectation that compensation measures for subtidal sand and subtidal mud features to the maximum extent of 26,400m^2 and 30,400m^2 for each feature respectively would be provided by the Applicant. Natural England continues to advise that an accurate MDS and realistic WCS for each feature should be presented and assessed for lasting habitat change/loss. The site-specific surveys along with information provided within the Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA) and Cable Specification Installation Plan (CSIP) should be sufficient to give a more accurate breakdown of the cable protection requirements and subsequent lasting habitat change/loss for each of the features. We highlight the importance of providing a more realistic MDS for long-term habitat loss for each of the features to inform the compensation requirements for MEEB. Please see table 6 in Part B below for further details on compensation requirements and for each habitat feature in the MCZ. Additionally, we advise that the finalised MDS figures should be updated in all the relevant documents.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's comments regarding the refinement of the MDS as presented in the Stage 2 Assessment Report (REP1-059). As noted in the Applicants' response to comment RI_J1 & J3, the Outline Offshore CSIP (APP-220) as part of the detailed design process preconstruction survey data will be used to inform the final routing of the cable, any micro-siting requirements and areas where there is a higher risk of remedial works such as external cable protection. At this stage in the consenting process, however, the Applicants are unable to refine the assumptions further with respect to where the contingency cable protection for ground conditions will be required in the Fylde MCZ (if any is required at all). Therefore the summary presented by Natural England aligns with the MDS presented in Table A.5 of ,the Applicants' Stage 2 MCZ Assessment (REP1-059) and is the realistic MDS based on current information. The Applicants would also draw attention to the updated Outline CSIP submitted at Deadline 2 (J15/F02, REP2-022), which removed 'rock dump' from the list of cable protection types to be used within the Fylde MCZ in acknowledgment that this is the least recoverable type of protection. The Applicants have responded to each of the points raised by Natural England in Table 6 in Part B of their response in Table 2.12 above. The Applicants and Natural England will be meeting on the 22 July 2025 to review the PADSS and Risks and Issues log with respect to offshore matters, and will discuss this matter, which will allow the parties to provide updated positions at any issue specific hearings in week commencing 28 July and at Deadline 4.
J4	**Significance of Impacts to Fylde MCZ** We advise as with other recently consented projects which propose to have similar 'lasting' impacts to that of Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets that the conservation objectives of the site will be hindered by the project alone. Therefore, our advice provided within our RR/WR [RR-1601] remains unchanged. Section A1.6.5 [REP1-059] outlines the feature sensitivity and the highly localised nature of the impacts. Natural England reiterates its advice from RR/WR that presenting impacts considered as a percentage of the whole MCZ is misleading given the size of the site, the lasting habitat change/loss impacts from the Transmission Assets combined are still 30,400m^2. Additionally, the most recent condition assessment for Fylde MCZ concluded that subtidal sand and subtidal mud were in a favourable condition. Whilst the cable protection is in situ, the extent and distribution attribute of the site features can neither be maintained or restored, nor can the impacts be considered temporary even if removal is secured at decommissioning.	Please see the Applicants' response to J1 above.
J5	**Further Advice on Mitigation** Please see Table 6 in Part B of this document on Natural England's advice on MEEB In- Principle Plan, which also includes further advice on the following Commitments: CoT109, CoT116 and CoT117.	Please see the Applicants' responses to these comments in Table 7-5.

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J6	**Strategic Compensation** Natural England welcomes the Applicant's consideration of strategic compensation within the Benthic Compensation Strategy. We agree with the Applicant on the next steps included within the compensation strategy and therefore, as agreed in the meeting (12 February 2025) we aim to agree the level of impact which requires compensation in order to apply to the Marine Recovery Fund (MRF). However, we note the application is likely to be in the post-consent phase for this project. It is Natural England's understanding that based on the published Marine Recovery Fund Guidance (Jan 2025), DEFRA and DESNZ have included provision for the Morgan and Morecambe Transmission Assets project within the strategic compensation MPA designation and extension process. With the commitment within the Written Ministerial Statement to progress strategic benthic compensation, which as previously stated the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCB's) believe has the greatest likelihood of maintaining the coherence of the National Site Network; we do not believe there is merit in further progressing project specific compensation measures at this time.	The Applicants welcome Natural England's agreement that strategic compensation measures are likely to be the preferred and best method for the delivery of MEEB for the Fylde MCZ. The Applicants also welcome the confirmation that Natural England are of the understanding that Defra and DESNZ have included provision for the Transmission Assets within the strategic compensation MPA designation and extension process, should the Secretary of State determine that MEEB is required for the Transmission Assets. As outlined in the Applicants' response to RI_J7 & J10, the Applicants have explored a longlist of potential project-led MEEB options but have not developed these further on the basis of Natural England's advice.
J7	**Project led compensation** We note that the Applicant agree with Natural England on progressing with the strategic compensation approach but also include a long list of project options. Going forwards Natural England will not provide any additional advice into examination on the project led options, unless a new option is proposed and/or we are asked by the Examining Authority to comment on these options specifically.	The Applicants note Natural England's comment regarding project led compensation.