

Date: 22 September 2025

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Deadline 5 – South Ribble Borough Council Response to Examining Authority’s Written Questions and Requests for information ExQ2)

Planning Inspectorate Ref: EN020028

Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Farms Transmission Assets

This correspondence forms South Ribble Borough Council’s response to ExQ2 questions. Where only one part of a question is relevant to this Council, that point is noted prior to the relevant response.

Q2.1.1.1 Co-Ordination and Collaboration

The applicants’ response to ExQ1.1.7 [REP3-056] explains that whilst flexibility is required to allow each of the projects to construct independently of each other, opportunities may emerge for further coordination depending on each project achieving Financial Investment Decision and following detailed design. Notwithstanding the measures introduced such as Requirement 25 (Onshore collaboration) in the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO), what further specific drafting can be incorporated into the relevant control and management documents and the dDCO to ensure that full opportunities are taken for co-ordination and collaboration where such opportunities emerge, in the interests of reducing and minimising the potential effects of the proposed development upon communities and the environment?

As noted in the applicants’ response to ExQ1.1.7 it is reasonable to expect flexibility to allow delivery of the projects independently where necessary. The applicants’ commitment to post consent collaboration is also noted and welcomed, but other than a requirement to share proposal details and documents there is little obligation for joint working where there is no justification for this to be separate. The use of the term ‘where possible’ is an unacceptably loose and subjective commitment which appears to be governed by commercial sensitivities with little consideration of the impact that separate construction timescales would inevitably have on the residents and users of the various Council areas. ExQ1.1.7 states that *‘the Applicants are unable to commit to further collaboration than already identified during construction’* suggests that the applicant is already unwilling to work jointly. Arguably this unwillingness will continue unless both parties are mandated to do so.

This Council requests that the Draft DCO is amended to mandate collaborative working unless circumstances which dictate otherwise are fully justified. These circumstances must take into account the effect that works will have on the residents of the relevant area, and should not wholly be based upon the needs, wants and commercial sensitivities of the applicants.

Q2.1.1. 5 Outline Communication Plan (OCP)

An updated Outline Communications Plan has been submitted by the applicants at deadline 4 (D4) [REP4-029].

a) Do the local authorities and parish councils have any comments and/or additional suggestions on the drafting of this plan?

b) The updated version of the plan no longer includes reference to a ‘local liaison committee, comprising relevant local representatives’ that was included in paragraph 1.3.1.1 of the previous version of the plan. Can the applicants explain why this has been deleted?

c) Do the local authorities and parish councils consider that the creation of a local liaison committee should be retained in the outline plan?

Point a) – subject to agreement to the final Code of Construction Practice document mentioned within the OCP, the Council has no objection to this document. Although a number of measures to ensure public engagement have been removed from the previous version, these appear to have been accounted for in the main by paragraph 1.4.1.3 of the revised OCP. This Council would however prefer a timescale for advanced notification to be included in para 1.4.1.3 where it states that ‘*Occupiers of nearby properties will be informed in advance of the works taking place*’. Late engagement proves no more beneficial to residents than no engagement at all, unless there are extenuating and emergency circumstances.

Point b) – applicants’ response only

Point c) – Proposed development within South Ribble is significant but is in a semi-rural location where impact would be restricted to a limited number of residents. For this reason, the residents of South Ribble are felt to be suitably protected by proposed Para 1.4.1.3 subject to the comments made in point a). The residents of other relevant local authority areas however would in this Councils opinion benefit from a local liaison committee, and it is regrettable that the option has been removed from the draft OCP. South Ribble would welcome the chance to be represented at any local liaison committee to ensure collaborative working.

Deletion of the sentence ‘*Agricultural Liaison Officer(s) will be appointed and will be the point of contact for landowners. The role is defined in the Outline CoCP (document reference J1)*’ however is more likely to affect the occupants of the Howick Cross Lane, Penwortham area where the majority of work south of the River Ribble is proposed, and which is predominantly agricultural in nature. This Council would suggest that reference

to the same is added back into the proposed changes for 1.4.1.3 for completeness, and to give surety to local residents/farmers who may be affected.

This representation is submitted for, and on behalf of South Ribble Borough Council. Should you have any comments or questions please do not hesitate to contact us

Kind regards

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Chief Planning Officer / Head of Planning and Enforcement