



MORGAN AND MORECAMBE OFFSHORE WIND FARMS: TRANSMISSION ASSETS

Annex 2.2 to Applicants' Response to Deadline 4 submissions from Statutory Consultees and other organisation: Fylde Borough Council (REP4-134)



Deadline: Deadline 5
Application Reference: EN020028

Document Numbers:
MRCNS-J3303-JVW-19197
MOR001-FLO-CON-CAG-RPT-0150

Document Reference: S_D5_2.2

22 September 2025
F01

Document status					
Version	Purpose of document	Approved by	Date	Approved by	Date
F01	Deadline 5	GL	September 2025	IM	September 2025

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1 Applicants' Response to IPs' Submissions at Deadline 4

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1.1 Following Deadline 4, Morgan Offshore Wind Limited ('Morgan OWL') and Morecambe Offshore Windfarm Limited ('Morecambe OWL'), (together, 'the Applicants') have taken the opportunity to review each of the submissions from Interested Parties. This includes Written Representation, post-hearing submissions as well as responses to ExQ1.
- 1.1.1.2 Details of the Applicants' response to Fylde Borough Council are set out in this annex.
- 1.1.1.3 The Applicants have numbered the submissions in line with the Planning Inspectorate's document library, with subsequent paragraph number, e.g. REP4-001.1, REP4-001.2, etc.

2 Applicants' Response to IPs' submissions at Deadline 4

2.1 Fylde Borough Council

Table 2.1: REP4-134 – Fylde Borough Council

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
REP4-134 134.1	<p>1 Introduction</p> <p>1.1.2 Fylde Council [FBC] is a statutory consultee and Interested Party for the proposed Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Farms Transmission Cables proposal.</p> <p>1.1.3 This report is prepared in response to matters raised verbally by the Examining Authority [ExA] during the ISH2 and ISH3 hearings in July 2025. This includes responses to Action Points issued by the ExA, as identified by reference to the relevant Action Point in the headings and listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Action Point 11 – Section 5.1 • Action Point 16 – Section 7.3• Action Point 17 – Section 2.1• Action Point 18 – Section 3.3• Action Point 19 – Section 2.2 <p>1.1.4 This report also includes responses to other matters raised, comprising the FBC written submission of oral cases.</p> <p>1.1.5 FBC also notes the Action Points requiring responses after Deadline 4 and fully expects to be able to provide them in accordance with the timescales requested by the ExA.</p>	<p>The Applicants note Fylde Borough Council's response and have responded below to each of the points raised.</p>
REP4-134 134.2	<p>1.2 The Impact of New Information on the Examination</p> <p>1.2.2 FBC notes the significant amount of new and updated information which the applicants have indicated will be submitted at Deadline 4, Deadline 5 and beyond. This is reflected in the long list of Action Points issued by the ExA.</p> <p>1.2.3 FBC will continue to review, consult upon and respond to this new information. However, FBC is concerned that the amount and</p>	<p>The Applicants note this response and disagree that there has been a significant amount of high level new and updated information in respect of this application to the extent that this has undermined the examination. Furthermore, the new information or clarifications that have been submitted to the examination is not atypical for DCO applications of this type, size or complexity. These updates often reflect progress made with interested parties or are provided to support the Examining Authority</p>

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	<p>significance of additional information to be submitted at this stage in the Examination may prevent proper consideration of the likely impacts and may undermine processes to ensure appropriate mitigation can be secured.</p> <p>1.2.4 Furthermore, FBC notes that some of this information has been outstanding for a long period of time, including submissions requested by the ExA at the Preliminary Hearing and information requested by key consultees as early as 2023. For example, requests made by Natural England in relation to sand lizard surveys in November 2023 and as acknowledged in writing by the applicants at Page 48 of Volume 3, Chapter 3 of their Environmental Statement [APP-075], are still being sustained in response to Q6.1.5 of the ExA Written Question [REP3-095].</p> <p>1.2.5 FBC also has concerns that where new information is being prepared, it could not now appropriately impact the proposals. For example, where the applicants have not properly distinguished between different grades of agricultural land in their baseline assessment and subsequent route selection process (see Q13.1.11 of [REP3-082]), an appropriate proposal cannot now necessarily be achieved within the scope of this NSIP. Or with respect to the sand lizard issue outlined above, where access between the highway and landfall area is naturally constrained, with no reasonable alternative exist within the Order Limits to respond to the outcome of the required sands lizard surveys. This issue presents across a range of matters.</p> <p>1.2.6 The Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project [NSIP] consenting process is intended to be front-loaded and the applicants are required to be well-prepared, to enable efficient examination within the maximum six months provided by Section 98(1) of the Planning Act.</p> <p>1.2.7 This proposal is for two independent projects, cutting right across the full width of The Fylde. FBC has made clear in its written submissions that the likely impacts will be significant, with clear social, economic and environmental harm. The likely extended and repeat construction phases will exacerbate these impacts.</p> <p>1.2.8 In this regard, matters relating to the assessment of the likely impacts are particularly complex and impactful for these projects. FBC</p>	<p>in carrying out the examination, such as providing clarificatory notes in response to the ExA's written questions or hearing action points.</p>

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	therefore raises significant concerns at this stage that the applicant has a duty to front-load the process and can undermined the efficiency of the Examination.	
REP4-134 134.3	<p>1.3 Statement of Common Ground</p> <p>1.3.2 The ExA has stressed the importance of the submission of a Statement of Common Ground [SoCG] between FBC and the applicants. FBC understands the importance and utility of SoCGs and can confirm that the applicants have provided a draft SoCG, and that topic specific meetings have been held, with more scheduled over the next five weeks.</p> <p>1.3.3 Prior to ISH2, FBC intended to submit a draft SoCG at Deadline 4. However, as a result of the amount of new and updated information to be submitted across all topic areas by the applicants-Deadlines 4 and 5, FBC will not be submitting a draft SoCG at this time.</p> <p>1.3.4 FBC considers it would be inappropriate and ineffective to do so and instead, following review of the Deadline 4 information, and will make a decision as to submit a draft SoCG ahead or at, Deadline 5, following further meetings with the applicants.</p> <p>1.3.5 Please note that excluding any clearly identified quotations which have been prepared by other parties, all parts of the content of this written submission is the work of the officers of FBC and no part of it has been generated by AI.</p>	<p>The aim of the SoCG process is to capture discussions held, progress made to date and to summarise next steps in order to reach agreement. It therefore captures a snap shot in time in the process. It is the Applicants' view that submission of draft SoCGs are beneficial even if not all points are addressed.</p> <p>The Applicants confirm that further meetings have been held with Fylde Borough Council and an updated SoCG has been submitted at Deadline 5 (S_D1_6.3/F02).</p>
REP4-134 134.4	<p>2 DCO Requirements</p> <p>2.1 Onshore Collaboration – Requirements 25 (ExA Action Point 17)</p> <p>2.1.2 The applicants have chosen to progress a joint application whilst maintaining complete independence of both Project A and Project B.</p> <p>2.1.3 The applicants have presented a joint Environmental Statement, Outline Management Plans, Commitments and dDCO (albeit with some separation of schedules).</p> <p>2.1.4 In this regard, whilst the applicants are aiming at a consent which would enable one or both projects to come forward either sequentially or concurrently, the two projects are only linked in terms of their assessment of likely harm and proposed mitigation.</p>	<p>The Applicants note that nothing outside of the Requirements (or DML conditions) requires approvals of documentation. On this basis, there is no need to extend the operation of Requirement 25 beyond the information to be submitted as part of discharge of the requirements. The Applicants have made minor, clarificatory amends to align the drafting at Requirement 25 of Schedules 2A and 2B of the draft DCO (C1/F07) at Deadline 5 with that in the equivalent deemed marine licence condition. The Applicants would highlight the wording in this Requirement follows recent precedent from the Sheringham and Dudgeon Extension Projects. It is not considered reasonable or proportionate to impose an obligation on the other undertaker to provide comments, as there may be situations</p>

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	<p>2.1.5 Requirements 25 of the dDCO [REP3-009] briefly set out a commitment for information sharing between each project. However, there is no obligation for either Morgan or Morecambe to formally comment on any such information and no prescribed specifications of what should be provided.</p> <p>2.1.6 Additionally, the Requirements only apply to information submitted for approval. FBC considers that the Requirements should relate to all relevant information submitted for any Requirement, publication or notification (i.e. any submitted information which does require consent) and this should be captured with a prescribed list.</p> <p>2.1.7 FBC fully understands that the purpose of the Requirements is to reduce the likelihood of any harm arising from inefficiencies and incompatibilities in the programme of works and delivery of commitments for both projects.</p> <p>2.1.8 Therefore, FBC considers that Requirements 25 of the dDCO should be redrafted to require notification and specification to be carried out in such a way as to reduce the risk of increased harm and conflict with other Requirements and Commitments.</p>	<p>where this is not a necessary action to be taken. It is in each of Morgan and Morecambe's interest to engage with the other where relevant.</p> <p>The Applicants have provided detail on coordination and collaboration previously (see for example REP1-039) and the Applicants will be responding to questions around coordination and collaboration arising from the Examining Authority's second questions (see the responses to Q2.1.1.1 and Q1:3.19 (S_D5_5)).</p> <p>Further, the Applicants have updated the Outline Code of Construction Practice (J1/F04), Outline Ecological Management Plan (J6/F05), Outline Landscape Management Plan (J2/F04), outline Onshore WSI (J9/F04) and Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (J5/F04) setting out how the Applicants would set up a Construction Coordination Working Group to strengthen the Applicants' commitments to exploration of opportunities and measures for coordination where practicable post consent. This will work in tandem with requirement 25.</p>

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REP4-134 134.5	<p>2.2 Substation Works – Requirements 4 (ExA Action Point 19)</p> <p>2.2.2 Requirements 4 of the dDCO [REP3-009] restrict commencement of the substation works until a list of specified details have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority.</p> <p>2.2.3 The list of requirements includes “vehicular and pedestrian access, parking and circulation areas.” In terms of its own remit as a planning authority, FBC considers that the final sentence of part (1) of the Requirements should be extended to include “or local highway authority.”</p> <p>2.2.4 This approach is consistent with others made DCOs, such as Part 3 Requirement 9 of the Rampion 2 DCO which the applicants have relied upon as reference for several other matters.</p>	<p>The Applicants have considered the drafting in Rampion 2 and have updated Requirement 4 of Schedules 2A and 2B to the draft DCO (C1/F07) at Deadline 5.</p>
REP4-134 134.6	<p>3 Landscape</p> <p>3.1.2 At ISH2, the applicants advised the ExA that they were continuing to engage with FBC on matters relating to landscape and visual impacts. FBC can confirm that a series of meetings have been schedule ahead of Deadline 5 which should allow a substantively complete Statement of Common Ground [SoCG] to be submitted at Deadline 5, insofar as it relates to landscape.</p> <p>3.1.3 However, FBC wishes to provide a summary of oral submission made at ISH2 and ISH3 relating to landscape.</p>	<p>The Applicants note the comment and confirm a series of meetings have been held relating to landscape and visual impacts and a draft SoCG has been submitted at Deadline 5 (S_D1_6.3/F02).</p>
REP4-134 134.7	<p>3.2 Significance of impacts</p> <p>3.2.2 FBC notes the comments made by the ExA during ISH2 and specifically in relation to Q13.1.2 of the Written Questions.</p> <p>3.2.3 FBC maintains its position set out in its response to the same question [REP3- 082] and in Section 12 of its Local Impact Report [REP1-078], and on which FBC expands upon its argument at 2.31.1 in</p>	<p>The Applicants acknowledge FBC’s continued position, and their interpretation and application of guidance set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013).</p> <p>As set out previously set out in the Applicants’ response the FBC’s IP submission to ExQ13.1.2 (see REP4-097), the Applicants agree with FBC’s written submissions to date that there are “...no hard and fast rules about what effects should be deemed ‘significant’...”. The</p>

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	<p>its answers [REP3-082], noting that a degree of subjectivity and judgement is inherent within the assessment of landscape effects.</p> <p>3.2.4 By extension, where effects are considered to not be significant, they should not be completely disregarded. This not only risks undermining a proper understanding of the interrelated significant effects but also weakening the assessment particularly where there is any disagreement about the significance of those effects.</p> <p>3.2.5 Furthermore, FBC considers that moderate effects are important effects which should be considered.</p> <p>3.2.6 FBC agrees with the ExA position that the overall planning balance should consider all effects and that the Planning Statement should present that consideration.</p>	<p>Applicants further highlight GLVIA3 paragraph 3.32, which also advises that <i>"LVIA's should always distinguish clearly what are considered to be significant and nonsignificant effects."</i></p> <p>Moreover, the Applicants welcome FBC's recognition in REP3-082 that the Applicants have appropriately distinguished between the significant effects which might influence the final decision against those which would not. The Applicants reiterate that GLVIA3 does not prescribe the exact threshold at which point a landscape or visual effect becomes 'significant', but it does require a transparent process to be followed, which considers the sensitivity of receptors, magnitude of impact, and sufficient descriptive text to support the final significance of effect. Additionally, the threshold of Moderate adverse and below is a typical point at which landscape and visual effects are not considered significant. Paragraph 10.11.4.4 of the LVIA clarifies that effects assessed as being of 'moderate' significance are not automatically treated as EIA significant, but this does not mean they are disregarded. As explicitly stated in the LVIA, such effects are given appropriate weight in the assessment process. This includes informing judgements on scheme design, mitigation, and the balancing of likely effects in the context of decision-making.</p> <p>The Applicants therefore remain of the view that the methodology and professional judgements applied in the assessment are consistent with GLVIA3 and EIA best practice and provide a sound evidential base for the ExA's consideration of landscape and visual effects</p> <p>This topic of discussion has been discussed as part of the Applicants engagement with FBC through the SoCG process. The draft SoCG – submitted at Deadline 5 (S_D1_6.3/F02).</p>
<p>REP4-134 134.8</p>	<p>3.3 Areas of Separation Policy (ExA Action Point 18)</p> <p>3.3.2 Areas of Separation [AoS] are defined by Policy GD3 of the Fylde Local; Plan to 2032 (incorporating Partial Review) [FLP].</p> <p>3.3.3 At ISH2, the applicants confirmed their position that they do not consider Policy GD3 applies to their proposals. For the reasons set out in Section 12 of its Local Impact Report [REP1-078] and expanded upon</p>	<p>The Applicants have provided their position in relation to Areas of Separation in their responses at Deadline 3, and at Deadline 4 (see REP4-108 at ISH2.18, and REP4-092 in section 1.2).</p> <p>The Applicants' position is that an Area of Separation – a local planning policy designation – is by, definition, a well-defined space between settlements.</p>

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	<p>below, FBC is of the strong opinion that the policy does apply and as such, the applicants should set out an assessment against this policy.</p> <p>3.3.4 A simple reading of the policy establishes that <i>“Development will be assessed in terms of its impact upon the Area(s) of Separation”</i>.</p> <p>3.3.5 There is no requirement in the policy that development is required to be located within the AoS for the policy to apply.</p> <p>3.3.6 Further to this, Section 7.10-12 of the FLP provides the supporting text to the policy, setting out the justification and explanation as to the purpose of the areas of separation and notably includes that:</p> <p>3.3.7 <i>“An Area of Separation is designed to preserve the character and distinctiveness of individual settlements by restricting inappropriate development that would result in the coalescence of two distinct and separate settlements.”</i></p> <p>3.3.8 The supporting text also includes that a critical element of the policy in any assessment of the impact of development is the assessment of <i>“harm to the effectiveness of the gap between the settlements and, in particular, the degree to which the development proposed would compromise the function of the Area(s) of Separation in protecting the identity and distinctiveness of settlements”</i> (emphasis added).</p> <p>3.3.9 FBC is of the opinion that the proposed substations will have significant impact of the identity and distinctiveness of nearby settlements, because of their visual, perceptual and experiential effect on the proposed site and surrounding area, which is significant, at scale and goes well into and beyond the AoS.</p> <p>3.3.10 FBC considers that this interpretation is supported by the principle set out in Section C1 of the National Design Code (2024), which explains that well designed development responds positively to features of the site itself and beyond, including both physical and non-physical features with specific reference to perception.</p> <p>3.3.11 FBC does not rely upon the National Design Code as directly relevant to these proposals but instead as a reputable source to support this approach to design considerations.</p>	<p>As confirmed by the Fylde Local Plan to 2032: <i>“An Area of Separation is designed to preserve the character and distinctiveness of individual settlements by restricting inappropriate development that would result in the coalescence of two distinct and separate settlements”</i>. The wording of FBC’s Strategic Policy GD3 (Areas of Separation) goes on to say that: <i>“Development will be assessed in terms of its impact upon the Area(s) of Separation...”</i>.</p> <p>Whilst an Area of Separation may be argued by FBC as being capable of ‘supporting’ a Green Belt policy area – i.e. an additional policy zone/buffer/setting around/adjoining the Green Belt – it is not a reasonable interpretation of policy to consider that an Area of Separation can have an undefined area of possible influence beyond its policy boundary that may restrict development, especially when at a national level, areas covered by Green Belt policy are not afforded such protection to their ‘setting’.</p> <p>The extent of the policy area defining the Area of Separation is the extent of the area that the policy seeks to protect. Such a space needs clearly defined boundaries, as provided for in the Fylde Local Plan to 2032 Policies Map.</p> <p>Whilst users of the Local Plan (and its associated Policies Map) may assert that there is an <i>“implied area of separation around an area of separation”</i>, the Applicants’ position is that this would not be in accordance with the Local Plan or Policies Map.</p> <p>The Transmission Assets are therefore considered by the Applicants to be outside the Area of Separation and as a result, do not, and cannot as a matter of policy, have an impact on it.</p> <p>Separately, the Application documents demonstrate how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied to avoid, minimise, mitigate and, where necessary, compensate for impacts arising from the substations and wider Transmission Assets.</p> <p>In relation to the approach to design considerations including how the development responds positively to features of the site itself and beyond, including physical and non physical features (inc such matters as visibility for example), the oDP has been prepared fully cognisant of the importance of design with a full explanation of the pre submission design</p>

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	<p>3.3.12 FBC considers that the proposed development would by association have significant impacts on the AoS which would in turn negatively affect identity and the distinctiveness of settlements, which means that Policy GD3 is engaged.</p> <p>3.3.13 Therefore, the applicants should set out an appropriate assessment and mitigation in respect of this policy with respect to Avoid/Mitigate/Compensate principles.</p>	<p>process and clear commitments to a post consent process that has made good progress in discussions with the Councils. The oDP is in the process of being updated including responses from the Councils with a focus on reinforcing the provision of Project Level Design Principles and Codes to support the integration of the proposed substations.</p> <p>The Applicants do not consider that the substations lie sufficiently close to the existing settlements or are of a scale in relation to massing, to significantly affect the identity or distinctiveness of the settlements.</p>
<p>REP4-134 134.9</p>	<p>3.4 Further assessment</p> <p>3.4.2 FBC notes the ExA Action Points relating to Landscape Management, Landscape and Visual Impact, and the Green Belt. These actions are pending new and updated information to be submitted by the applicants at Deadline 4 and following a series of topic meetings being arranged between the relevant parties.</p> <p>3.4.3 FBC notes that the substations will have a significant impact on the landscape, including upon residents, workers and visitors. FBC supports the repeated requests, particularly from residents, for more information about the details of the proposals.</p> <p>3.4.4 Matters relating to site levels, building designs and landscaping are all critical to enable a proper understanding of the likely impacts of the proposals. FBC has repeatedly requested more information in this regard throughout its written submissions, most recently summarised in its response to ExA Written Questions Q1.2.3, Q13.1.2, Q13.1.14 and Q17.1.1 [REP3-082].</p> <p>3.4.5 Similarly, and with reference to the same questions, FBC maintains its position that the co-location of the substations is not justified and that the applicants' representation of the Horlock Rules in response to Q1.2.3 [REP3-056] and as set out in its Green Belt Technical Note [REP3-069] is not an accurate assessment of the impacts.</p> <p>3.4.6 FBC will be commenting further following the publication of the applicants' Deadline 4 documents which is due to include an update to the Green Belt Technical Note.</p>	<p><u>ExA Action Points and submitted information</u></p> <p>The Applicants note FBC's commentary and reiterate their position, as set out in REP4-134 134.2 above, that they do not agree with FBC's assertion that a significant amount of "new and updated" material was to be submitted at Deadline 4.</p> <p>The Applicants note that accompanying submissions are made in direct response to questions and requests raised by all parties engaged in the Examination process. It is also characteristic of a DCO application of this scale and complexity that supplementary and clarifying information is provided on an ongoing basis to ensure a clear and robust evidential base for examination.</p> <p><u>Request for more information about the details of the proposal</u></p> <p>The Applicants recognise the importance of matters relating to site levels, building design and planting in understanding the likely effects of the proposed substations.</p> <p>However, the Applicants reiterate that its consenting strategy establishes the parameters, commitments and design principles by which the Transmission Assets have been designed and assessed through the EIA process in accordance with best practice, namely the Rochdale Envelope. The relevant submitted documents include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The spatial extent defined by the Work Plans (REP3-005 and REP3-007); • The parameters set out in Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project description (REP2-008) • Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments Register (REP4-018);

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline Landscape Management Plan (oLMP) (REP-054); • Outline Ecological Management Plan (oEMP) (REP4-058); and • Outline Design Principles (oDP) (APP-209). <p>The Transmission Assets' <i>Maximum Design Scenarios</i> (MDS) defines the maximum limits of the Transmission Assets' construction, operational and decommissioning parameters. This is secured through Requirement 5 of Schedules 2A and 2B of the draft DCO (REP4-007). This requirement ensures that the substations cannot exceed the assessed parameters.</p> <p>The oLMP (REP4-054) and outline Design Principles (oDP) (APP-209) further establish the Applicants' commitments to consider building form, materiality and landscape treatment post consent and to accord with defined Project Level Design Principles (prepared in response to FBC's and others requests) and updated Design Codes. The Applicants have engaged with FBC (amongst other stakeholders) as part of the SoCG process, as reflected in an emerging updated outline Design Principles document anticipated to be settled and agreed for D6. The Applicants would highlight that the Applicants are required to carry out works in accordance with the oLMP and oDP , which is secured via Requirements 6 & 7 and 4 respectively of Schedules 2A and 2B of the draft DCO (REP4-007)</p> <p>Furthermore, the Applicants submitted further topographic information at Deadline 3 – see the Technical Note: Landscape and Design Matters (REP3-064) – to support stakeholders' understanding of the relationship between the proposed substation site levels and the surrounding landform. The levels proposals have been more clearly presented as part of the oDP update. Finalised levels will remain subject to approval (by the discharging authority) under Requirement 4 of the draft DCO (REP4-007).</p> <p>Section 1.2.5 <i>Topographic Information</i> of the Technical Note (REP3-064) reaffirms the Applicants' position that its approach is consistent with other offshore wind projects and their associated onshore transmission infrastructure, and that final substation layouts and platform levels will be</p>

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		<p>determined during the detailed design stage, informed by the necessary technical requirements.</p> <p>Good progress has been made with relevant local planning authorities in relation to defining the pre consent design status and the post consent design process and the role of Project Level Design Principles and Design Code to inform the design development.</p> <p>The Applicants consider that Volume 3, Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual Resources (APP-123) provide a complete and robust basis for the assessment in which no details are absent or considered insufficient so as to undermine the assessment conclusions. The Applicants consider that discussions in relation to design and development of the oDP (J3/F02) provide increased confidence to the local planning authority, particularly FBC.</p> <p><u>Justification of the onshore substations co-location</u></p> <p>As previously set out in REP1-037, REP3-069 and REP4-093, the Applicants sought to locate the onshore substations in proximity to each other (i.e. within the same onshore substation search zone) to avoid infrastructure proliferation and to maintain a co-ordinated grid connection route as far as possible, to the Point of Interconnection at Penwortham Substation (particularly for the 400kV grid connection cables which need to be cooled). Co-ordination of infrastructure is a recommendation of the Holistic Network Design process and is also reflected in NPS policy in EN-5 (paragraphs 2.13.5 and 2.13.7). There are significant benefits to be gained though the co-ordination of the substations and these are set out in the Applicants' Response to the Examining Authority's Written Questions (REP3-056, Q13.1.10) and in paragraphs 1.7.2.27- 1.7.2.30 of the revised Green Belt Technical Note (REP4-092), including a common design approach defined in the oDP (J3/F02).</p> <p>Regarding the application of NGET's Horlock Rules, the Horlock Rules (which are embodied in the policy of NPS EN-5) provide guidelines for, the design and siting of substations. They intend to ensure that substations are appropriately located and designed, taking into consideration environmental and community impacts.</p> <p>The Applicants' response to the Examining Authority's Written Question Q1.2.3 provides a summary of the Site Selection Process, which is more</p>

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		extensively detailed in Chapter 4 of the Environmental Statement (AS-026) and corresponding Annex 4.3 (AS-028)) and demonstrates how NGET's Horlock Rules were applied during the site selection process to refine the substation search areas at each stage, particularly to exclude areas subject to environmental designations, built up commercial and residential areas. In summary, the Horlock Rules provided a tool in the refinement of search areas, rather than the assessment of impacts of a proposal.
REP4-134 134.10	<p>4 Greenbelt</p> <p>4.1.2 At ISH2, the applicants advised the ExA that they were continuing to engage with FBC on matters relating to the Green Belt. FBC can confirm that a series of meetings have been schedule ahead of Deadline 5 which should allow a substantively complete Statement of Common Ground [SoCG] to be submitted at Deadline 5, insofar as it relates to landscape.</p> <p>4.1.3 However, FBC wishes to provide a summary of oral submission made at ISH2 and ISH3 as they relate to Green Belt matters.</p>	The Applicants acknowledge this comment, and meetings have been progressed as scheduled with meetings planned post D5 in support of finalising the Green Belt SoCG for D6. An interim draft SoCG has been submitted at Deadline 5 (S_D1_6.3/F02).
REP4-134 134.11	<p>4.2 Site selection</p> <p>4.2.2 FBC continue to advocate for proper consideration of alternative sites for the substations, including where the sites are not co-located.</p> <p>4.2.3 The applicants have confirmed that there will be no functional dependence between the sites either during construction, operation or any other time. Indeed, they have resisted requests to consider options for sharing infrastructure with a view to reducing the overall size of the substations, setting out that this would not be commercially practical. In this regard, there is no technical requirement which governs proximity between the substations.</p> <p>4.2.4 The applicants have set out their justification for co-location, summarised most recently in their response to ExA Written Question Q1.2.3 [REP3-056] and their Green Belt Technical Note [REP3-069].</p> <p>4.2.5 FBC considers that nothing within the Horlock Rules supports or encourages colocation of substations. In fact, the reverse is factually</p>	<p>The Applicants note the response from FBC in relation to site selection and consideration of alternatives.</p> <p>The Applicants have provided responses related to the site selection and co-location of the onshore substations within REP3-056 and REP1-037 (ISH1_10 and ISH1_12).</p> <p>The Applicants would clarify that the site selection and consideration of alternatives process has considered the application of the Horlock Rules, but has not suggested that the Horlock Rules justifies co-location of onshore infrastructure. As noted in the response 134.9 above, the Horlock Rules are guidance which intends to ensure that substations are appropriately located and designed, taking into consideration environmental and community impacts.</p> <p>The Applicants have previously cited the Holistic Network Design Report and its recommendations, and NPS policy in EN-5 for justification why co-location of the onshore substations is appropriate; and have provided</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	correct, in that all criteria as identified in the Horlock Rules could be better responded to by careful consideration and assessment of separate locations for the substations.	a detailed response on the benefits and disbenefits of having two separate substations in the Green Belt in response to ExAQs Q13.1.10 of REP3-056.
REP4-134 134.12	<p>4.3 Greenbelt harm</p> <p>4.3.2 FBC disagrees with the applicants' conclusion that harm to the green belt is "limited".</p> <p>4.3.3 National Policy Statement EN-1 provides guidance and refers to the National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF]. Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states: <i>"When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances."</i></p> <p>4.3.4 The applicants attempt to distinguish between harm to the Green Belt and what they term other harms, which is then considered to include visual impacts. This is a flawed distinction as the extent of the permanent land take for the substations as a percentage of the Green Belt is used by the applicants to suggest that the effect would be minimal.</p> <p>4.3.5 However, the size and visual impacts of the substation structures is fundamental to any assessment of openness in its setting and landscape. Any assessment of visual impacts indicates that the effect of the inappropriate development in the green belt is to fundamentally undermine the green belt.</p> <p>4.3.6 The NPPF and EN-1 align in clearly setting out that:</p> <p>4.3.7 <i>"Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations."</i></p> <p>4.3.8 Assessment of this balance is for the decision maker and should be assessed considering the substantial harm and impacts arising</p>	<p>The Applicants refer to the updated <i>Green Belt Technical Note (Rev F02)</i> (REP4-092) submitted at D4. This Technical Note presents the Applicants' analysis of the harm to result from the Transmission Assets, during both the construction and operational phases on the Green Belt in Section 1.6.</p> <p>This section considers both harm to be caused to the Green Belt by virtue of inappropriate development (which includes detailed consideration of harm to be caused to the spatial and visual openness, and to the relevant purposes of the Green Belt) and other potential harms, including consideration of landscape and visual impacts (extending beyond spatial and visual openness to include landscape character), amenity (including noise), biodiversity and Highways impacts.</p> <p>The Technical Note (REP4-092) acknowledges that although there will be impacts to the Green Belt as a result of the installation of the substations as described, these impacts will principally be limited to the vicinity of the substations. The resulting harm on the fundamental aim and relevant purposes of the wider Green Belt will be limited and the general performance of the Green Belt in the affected area would remain effective in both the construction and operational phases.</p> <p>It should also be noted that any harm caused during the construction phase, as a result of the construction compounds, would occur over a relatively short period and will result in no permanent harm to the Green Belt. It is not considered that harms caused by temporary works should carry much, if any weight, given that Green Belt policy is directed towards consideration of development that is permanent.</p> <p>The Applicants do not dispute that 'substantial weight' should be given to any harm to the Green Belt as stipulated in NPS EN-1 and NPPF paragraph 153, but as demonstrated in the Green Belt Technical Note (Section 1.7), robust very special circumstances do exist to clearly</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	including noise from the built development of the substations and should not disregard, as put forward by the applicants.	<p>outweigh the identified limited, short and longer term, harms arising from the proposals by reason of inappropriate development.</p> <p>Notwithstanding that very special circumstances exist and are demonstrated in Section 1.7 of the Green Belt Technical Note (REP4-092), the Transmission Assets are considered to comprise a Critical National Priority Project. The requirements of NPS EN-1 have been met, including the appropriate application of the mitigation hierarchy, and therefore the presumption that the test of very special circumstances is met, applies.</p>
REP4-134 134.13	<p>5 Trees and hedges</p> <p>5.1 Trees Subject to Preservation Orders (ExA Action Point 11)</p> <p>5.1.2 At ISH3 the ExA requested that FBC provide details on the previous DCOs and Articles with alternative drafting approaches to Article 36 (Trees Subject to Preservation Orders).</p> <p>5.1.3 In the first instance, FBC refers to 'Advice Note Fifteen: drafting Development Consent Orders' and specifically Good Practice Point 6. This requires that draft DCO should include a relevant Schedule and plan identifying the trees likely to be affected that are protected by TPOs and/or are otherwise protected.</p> <p>5.1.4 FBC considers this request to be reasonable and would not be onerous, on the basis that the number of trees likely to be captured by such a Schedule and plan would be relatively low. Importantly, the relatively low number of trees affected in absolute terms is more impactful in terms of the proportion of trees in the local area to be affected, given the very low overall tree coverage. Specifically, the FBC local authority area has 5.9% tree coverage, making it the area with the 17th lowest coverage out of 317 local authorities, according to data published by Friends of the Earth in 2022.</p> <p>5.1.5 FBC notes that the guidance sets this out as a starting point, with subsequent powers to allow works to trees building upon this approach, as per Paragraph 22.2 of Good Practice Point 6.</p> <p>5.1.6 It should also be noted that trees can be subject to tree preservation orders at any time, including between the current date and the commencement and completion of works on site, which could be a</p>	<p>The Applicants would first note that there are no trees within the Order Limits which are currently subject to a TPO (see section 1.10 of F3.10.5 Volume 3, Annex 10.5: Tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment – Parts 1 and 2 (APP-128 and APP-129)). This being said, the Applicants require the drafting of this article to remain in order to future proof the scheme against the possibility of trees becoming subject to a TPO in the future, as noted by FBC at point 5.1.6. The Applicants note that the Explanatory Memorandum of the Rampion 2 Order (REP6-010 of the Rampion 2 Examination Library) specifically notes that a purpose of this article is to future proof the scheme and this was accepted in that case.</p> <p>The Applicants would direct Fylde to Appendix A and B of F3.10.5 Volume 3, Annex 10.5: Tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment – Parts 1 and 2 (APP-128 and APP-129) which map the tree survey schedules as well as the tree constraints plans. In addition Tree Preservation Order and Hedgerow Plan Parts 1 to 3 (APP-165, APP-166 and APP-167) also show the TPOs in relation to the order limits.</p> <p>The Applicants would note that they cannot find precedented drafting in recently granted Orders requiring further applications. The Applicants would highlight that to require further applications for works goes against the principle that a DCO acts as a one stop shop where possible, for a range of consents. This is to ensure large scale projects of national importance can be delivered without unnecessary delays.</p> <p>In addition, the Applicants have submitted an Outline Arboricultural Method Statement (REF) as part of Deadline 5, the detail of which will be developed in detailed arboricultural method statement(s) post consent to</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	<p>lengthy drawn-out process, which is particularly relevant given the extended duration of the projects.</p> <p>5.1.7 Additionally, FBC notes that Commitment CoT03 of the Commitments Register [REP3-013] states that known trees subject to tree preservation orders have been directly avoided where practicable during the site selection process. FBC therefore assumes that the applicants have already identified and mapped out the protected trees and therefore this request is reasonable and achievable.</p> <p>5.1.8 On this basis, FBC also requests that Article 36 includes wording to require that an application for work affecting any protected trees, not otherwise identified in the initial Schedule and plan, is made prior to any such works taking place.</p> <p>5.1.9 FBC considers that this approach would align with the relevant national guidance and would improve the accuracy of the identifying likely harms to those trees protected and worthy of protection and would improve the effectiveness of required mitigation.</p> <p>5.1.10 On this basis, FBC requests that the applicants prepare a Schedule and plan in accordance with Good Practice Point 6 and that Article 36 of the DCO be updated to engage appropriately with the matters outline above.</p> <p>5.1.11 FBC will also be requiring like for like replacement to maintain the extent of tree cover across the Fylde for trees that are removed. This is consistent with EN-1, FBC Local Plan Policies ENV1 and ENV3, and 'Advice Note Fifteen: drafting Development Consent Orders'.</p>	<p>identify trees (including where relevant TPO trees) requiring removal and those avoided as part of detailed design. The Outline Arboricultural Method Statement contains controls, which are secured under Requirement 8(2)(r) of Schedules 2A and 2B of the draft Development Consent Order (C1/F07).</p> <p>In addition, paragraph 1.4.2.3 of the Outline Landscape Management Plan (REP4-054) states that one of the main objectives of the landscape proposals is to reinstate land and plant replacement trees, hedgerows and other vegetation where practicable.</p> <p>With regard to like for like replacement of trees, the Applicants have made a commitment (CoT13 of Volume 1, Annex 5.3: Commitments register (REP4-018)) to replace trees (where they are to be removed) with like for like species. This is secured by Schedules 2A&2B, Requirement 8 and Requirement 12 of the draft DCO (REP4-007) and would be agreed in consultation with FBC.</p> <p>Overall, the Applicants consider they have taken a reasonable and proportionate approach to potential removal of TPO trees and that this aligns with recent precedents.</p>
<p>REP4-134</p> <p>134.14</p>	<p>5.2 Scope of Hedge Removal</p> <p>5.2.2 The amount of hedgerow to be removed, as identified in Schedules 11A and 11B of the dDCO [REP3-009] is very large, at approximately 25km total. This is due to the large extent of the cable routing and Order limits significantly resulting in a greater and extended impact.</p> <p>5.2.3 Importantly, Section (4) of Article 35 of the dDCO allows for the removal of any hedgerow within the Order limits, in addition to those identified in Schedules 11A and 11B. FBC considers this to be unwarranted, inappropriate and not in accordance with Good Practice Point 6 of 'Advice Note Fifteen: drafting Development Consent Orders'</p>	<p>The Applicants have reviewed the wording of Article 35 against the Mona Offshore Wind Farm Order 2025 and consider that it is appropriate to update the drafting such that, unless otherwise agreed, Morgan can only remove important hedgerows that are identified in Schedule 11A and Morecambe can only remove important hedgerows that are identified in Schedule 11B. This is qualified by the inclusion of 'unless otherwise agreed', in light of the fact the Applicants have not been provided with full land access across the entire onshore Order limits and therefore it is possible that additional hedgerows may be identified when access to those areas of land is taken post consent. In the case of refusal,</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	<p>which requires all hedgerows affected by the proposed development to be identified within the Schedules.</p> <p>5.2.4 FBC requires that the applicants prepare a Schedule and plan in accordance with Good Practice Point 6 and that Article 36 of the DCO be updated to engage appropriately with these matters.</p>	<p>Morgan/Morecambe would be required to obtain a separate consent for removal of that important hedgerow.</p>
<p>REP4-134 134.15</p>	<p>5.3 Standards for Works to All Trees and Hedges</p> <p>5.3.2 Article 35 of the dDCO [REP3-009] allows for works to trees and hedges, including felling and removal, without any appropriate control.</p> <p>5.3.3 Neither the dDCO, nor the Commitments Register [REP3-013] make reference to any controls or standards in terms of how works under Article 35 would be carried out. A specification of works is therefore required.</p> <p>5.3.4 Section 5.11.27 of EN-1 includes a requirement for existing trees to be retained wherever possible and compensation provided where loss is unavoidable. It is entirely reasonable to extend this principle to require that works to retained trees to be carried out in such a way that harm to the long-term health of those trees is minimised.</p> <p>5.3.5 FBC therefore considers it appropriate to include control either within the DCO or Commitment Register, such as that works should be carried out in accordance with BS3998:2010 and BS5837:2012, and that tree health checks should be conducted by a suitably qualified Arboricultural Clerk of Works to satisfy the monitoring and supervision requirements within BS5837:2012.</p> <p>5.3.6 FBC requires like for like replacement for hedge loss, to achieve this recording of the hedge removal, tree/shrub species and soil types needs to be fully recorded. This is consistent with EN-1, FBC Local Plan Policies ENV1 and ENV3, and 'Advice Note Fifteen: drafting Development Consent Orders'.</p>	<p>The Applicants have prepared an outline Arboricultural Method Statement (S_D5_10) which is secured through Requirement 8 of Schedules 2A and 2B to in the draft DCO (C1/F07). Measures include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any further surveys required would be undertaken in accordance with BS5837:2012 All works to trees shall be carried out in accordance with BS3998:2010 and latest arboricultural best practice. All tree work shall be carried out by suitably qualified, competent and insured arboricultural contractors in accordance with Arboricultural Association Standard Conditions of Contract and Specifications for Tree Works (2008) Edition Measures to ensure tree health is considered and maintained throughout construction (such as construction exclusion zones and tree protection fencing) <p>The Applicants have also updated Section 1.6.3 of the Outline Ecological Management Plan at Deadline 5 (REF) to provide further clarity of the measures that would be in place to ensure the removal of and works to hedgerows are minimised. The measures include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All hedgerows and trees retained within, or on the boundary of, construction work areas will be appropriately protected from damage during the construction works. A theoretical root protection area (RPA) is to be calculated, to ensure hedgerows and associated trees are not harmed by development activities

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that all hedgerow removal works will comply with 'BS 5937:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations' Where hedgerow removal is proposed, works will be undertaken under ecological supervision. <p>In addition, paragraph 1.4.2.3 of the Outline Landscape Management Plan (REF) states that one of the main objectives of the landscape proposals is to reinstate land and plant replacement trees, hedgerows and other vegetation where practicable.</p>
REP4-134 134.16	<p>6 Ecology (Excluding dunes)</p> <p>6.1.2 FBC has provided separate comments relating to the sand dunes area within this written response.</p> <p>6.1.3 FBC notes the Action Points arising from ISH2 and ISH3 as they relate to ecology and will review the new and updated information as it becomes available. FBC expects to provide further written submissions, particularly in response to the range of Outline Management Plans relevant to ecological matters.</p> <p>6.1.4 FBC will also continue to engage with the applicants on matters relating to ecology. FBC can confirm that a series of meetings have been schedule ahead of Deadline 5 which should allow a substantively complete Statement of Common Ground [SoCG] to be submitted at Deadline 5, insofar as it relates to ecology.</p> <p>6.1.5 However, FBC also notes ongoing engagement between the applicants and key ecological consultees, notably Natural England and the Environment Agency. FBC notes with some concern the range of outstanding issues, including in relation to matters which have been a point of either disagreement or slow progress since at least 2023.</p> <p>6.1.6 The remainder of this section provides a summary of oral submission made by FBC at ISH2 and ISH3 as they relate to ecology.</p>	<p>The Applicants can confirm an SoCG meeting was held with Fylde on 5th September.</p> <p>The Applicants can confirm that there is ongoing engagement with EA and NE to discuss these matters. We consider this level of engagement to be typical of a project of this type and size and not anything of concern. Progress has been made on these issues and we do not consider this to be slow.</p>
REP4-134 134.17	<p>6.2 Biodiversity Net Gain</p> <p>6.2.2 FBC notes the extended discussions during ISH2 around biodiversity net gain [BNG].</p>	<p>The Applicants recognise the wording within the Fylde Local Plan to 2032 and have committed to providing biodiversity benefit, although the Applicants would reiterate that this is not a mandatory requirement and</p>

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	<p>6.2.3 FBC acknowledges the point made by the applicants that the mandatory requirements for BNG that apply to planning applications do not at present apply to NSIPs.</p> <p>6.2.4 However, Defra consulted between May and July on the implementation of changes to bring BNG into force for NSIPs, with a proposed “go live” date of May 2026, for applications made from that date. The proposed arrangements therefore will not be a legislative requirement until that date.</p> <p>6.2.5 Separately, the Fylde Local Plan to 2032 (incorporating Partial Review) Policy ENV2 contains a requirement in Section 1 b) iv) (bold text added for emphasis). This applies where development would affect nature conservation sites or ecological networks:</p> <p>6.2.6 <i>iv) Where development is considered necessary, adequate mitigation measures and compensatory habitat creation will be required through planning conditions and / or obligations, in order to secure measurable net gains for biodiversity. Measures should be put in place for the ongoing management of such features.</i></p> <p>6.2.7 <i>Where it has been demonstrated that significant harm cannot be avoided appropriate mitigation or, as a last resort, replacement or other compensation will be required. The location of appropriate mitigation, replacement or other compensation will be targeted, using a sequential approach, as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Within the development site;</i> • <i>In the immediate locality;</i> • <i>Within a Nature Improvement Area within the Borough;</i> • <i>Within a Nature Improvement Area elsewhere in the Fylde Coast; and lastly,</i> • <i>Elsewhere.</i> <p>6.2.8 Where significant harm resulting from development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, replaced or compensated, then planning permission will be refused</p> <p>6.2.9 Therefore, notwithstanding the absence of the impending legislative requirement, Local Plan policy carries a requirement for BNG</p>	<p>the earliest date that BNG requirements are to apply to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects is May 2026.</p> <p>It is the Applicants' view that their voluntary commitment to achieve an overall biodiversity benefit for areas of permanent habitat loss associated with the permanent above ground infrastructure of the Transmission Assets fulfils the requirements set out in the Fylde Local Plan. Full details of biodiversity benefits associated with the Transmission Assets are contained within the Onshore Biodiversity Benefit Statement. In addition, the Applicants have also submitted a clarification note regarding biodiversity benefit(S_D5_11))</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	<p>(above zero) for development relating to areas falling within any relevant designations specified within the Local Plan.</p> <p>6.2.10 FBC makes this point in response to the comments made by the applicants at ISH2, setting out that their proposal was for 'biodiversity benefit' and not BNG, on the basis that there is no requirement and that BNG was therefore voluntary. However, as set out above, there is a policy requirement for a BNG uplift.</p>	
<p>REP4-134 134.18</p>	<p>6.3 Extent of Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment – Temporary Impacts</p> <p>6.3.2 The applicants set out a position that BNG assessment and calculations are not required for the significant majority of the Order Limits, on the basis that the works would be temporary.</p> <p>6.3.3 FBC recommends that where land would be impacted for two or more years, this should not be considered temporary. When land is impacted for extended periods of time, species can become displaced permanently, or in a manner in which return is inhibited. Indeed, the proposed construction duration is beyond the average lifespan of some of the bird species likely to be impacted.</p> <p>6.3.4 FBC therefore requested that BNG calculations be carried out for the entire Order Limits and the findings be submitted to the Examination.</p>	<p>The Applicants have provided a clarification note regarding Biodiversity Benefit at Deadline 5 (S_D5_11), which provides details and context as to why net gain has been undertaken on the permanent infrastructure areas only.</p>
<p>REP4-134 134.19</p>	<p>6.4 Bird Mitigation</p> <p>6.4.2 The applicants contend that the areas of land supporting significant numbers of qualifying and notable bird species which will be affected by works is small in proportion to the overall size of the designated sites.</p> <p>6.4.3 This position is also set out in Table 1.70 of their Habitats Regulations Assessment (Special Areas of Conservation) [APP-017].</p> <p>6.4.4 However, the designated sites are very large and in absolute terms the areas of land affected are not insignificant. For example, the area of land of value to pink footed geese which will be temporarily affected by the works is given as 4,655,995 m2 (Table 1.77 of [APP-017]).</p>	<p>the Applicants would like to clarify that the areas of land that will be lost in comparison to the SPA are only of relevance to those specialist intertidal species that cannot utilise land outside of the SPA, therefore the Applicants are correct in their assessment that this loss of land is of minor significance given that it is only works at the landfall that will impact these species. For pink-footed geese and the potential loss of 4,655,995 m2 the Applicants would like to clarify that the geese are not constrained by the SPA; far from it, they will roost in the SPA but forage over farmland within 20km + of their roost. The Applicants would like to make the distinction that this figure of 4,655,995 m2 does not represent a temporary loss of pristine SPA habitats but that this is a temporary loss of intensively farmed land with low ecological value and that the geese move from arable field to arable field consuming crop leftovers and moving on when they are depleted. Pink-footed geese need this large</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	<p>6.4.5 However the numbers of qualifying bird species affected by the works will be significant for a number of species (e.g. more than 8,000 pink footed geese).</p> <p>6.4.6 The Lytham Moss BHS is regarded as likely functionally linked to designated sites, and is well used on a regular basis by a significant number of birds. The area is already subject to an increasing level of disturbance from nearby housing highway development.</p> <p>6.4.7 Given the scale of the land area affected by the works, the potential number of birds involved and existing pressures on the area there is reasonable doubt that the area proposed as a supplementary feeding area on the Moss will provide sufficient "carrying capacity" to accommodate the number of birds which could be displaced by the works, even allowing for the supplementary feeding efforts.</p> <p>6.4.8 FBC considers that further assessment and justification needs to be provided to give reassurance that the areas will be fit-for-purpose, particularly in terms of its "carrying capacity" for a variety of species.</p>	<p>area of land to feed upon as crops are not replenished within the same season, but if food sources were concentrated and replenished regularly (as is being proposed by the Applicants) then pink-footed geese would be able to meet their daily energy requirements over a much smaller area.</p> <p>The Applicants would like to note that the same mitigation measures that are being proposed were relied upon for construction of developments within the Fylde local plan (specifically goose feeding at Lytham Moss). Fylde Borough Council acknowledge that large numbers of geese regularly use this area, and the Applicants are well aware of this. In fact, this is precisely why this area was chosen for mitigation as it already contains the highest concentrations of pink-footed geese, and it is close to the area of impact (see S_D2_13 Site Selection of the Environmental Mitigation and Biodiversity Benefit Areas - Rev F01 (REP2-046)). The Applicants note that the Queensway housing development and road upgrade (part of Fylde Borough Council local plan) seem to have successfully implemented goose feeding in this area (as agreed with Natural England and Fylde Borough Council) for similar numbers of birds (based upon average numbers or goose days not peak counts), and would be interested in the reasons why Fylde Borough Council think this approach won't work for this project but was suitable for the Fylde Borough Council approved permanent developments in the area?</p> <p>The Applicants have developed a comprehensive feeding strategy for the displaced pink-footed geese that accounts for their daily energy requirements and the calorific value of the supplementary feed provided (see outline ecological management plan (REP4-058). By aligning the quantity and nutritional quality of the feed with the birds' energy needs, the Applicants effectively manage the carrying capacity of the supplementary feeding areas. This approach ensures that the correct number of displaced geese receive sufficient nutrition to offset the temporary loss and disturbance of their foraging habitats during the works.</p> <p>The detailed feeding strategy, including calculations of energy requirements and feed composition, is presented Section B.2.5 in J6 Outline Ecological Management Plan [REP4-058] and section 4. of S_D4_17 Onshore Terrestrial Waterbird Note - Rev F01 (REP4-120).</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
		<p>This strategy is a key component of the overall bird mitigation measures and provides assurance that the supplementary feeding areas will be fit for purpose and capable of supporting the displaced bird populations effectively.</p> <p>Regarding other species of waders and ducks, the areas affected by the works—whether due to habitat loss or disturbance—mainly consist of farmland habitats, which are generally not favoured by waterbirds. These birds prefer to roost and feed in intertidal habitats and wetlands. While the area at Lytham Moss will continue to provide farmland habitats for displaced birds, temporary scrapes (shallow depressions) suitable for waders and swans will be created to offer habitat during the autumn and winter periods. Therefore, existing capacity of the site will be increased.</p>
REP4-134 134.20	<p>6.5 Peat</p> <p>6.5.2 FBC notes with concern the assumptions made with regards to peat and will review the information provided by the applicants in response to ISH2 Action Point 14.</p> <p>6.5.3 In addition to potential deficiencies in the baseline assessment and the ability for this to affect the proposed Order Limits and cable routes, FBC commented that the Peat Soil Management Plan [APP-200] contains to commitment to prioritising leaving peat deposits in situ.</p> <p>6.5.4 FBC considers that the Soil Management Plan and Commitments should give appropriate positive weight to the principle of leaving peat deposits undisturbed and in situ. This can only be achieved by carrying out an appropriate level of survey work.</p>	<p>The Applicants maintain that Peat within the Transmission Assets Order Limits has been identified in limited areas through soil auger boring surveys, as detailed in Volume 3, Annex 6.2: Agricultural Land Classification Survey Results (APP-106), which also notes significant degradation of peat resources since the 1960s due to intensive agriculture. Section 1.7.6 of the Outline Soil Management Plan (APP-200) outlines commitments to manage peat impacts during construction, including further peat probing, careful handling and storage, and the development of Peat Management Plans (PMPs) to be approved under Requirement 8 of the draft DCO (REP4-007). Peat considerations are also addressed in Volume 3, Chapter 1: Geology, Hydrogeology and Ground Conditions (APP-068), Chapter 3: Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation (APP-075), Chapter 5: Historic Environment (APP-096), and Chapter 6: Land Use and Recreation (APP-104), supporting the conclusion that sufficient information is available to assess potential impacts on peat and inform mitigation requirements. The Applicants would also refer Fylde Borough Council to the Applicants submission at Deadline 4 – ISH2 Action point 14 (REP4-118) which provides further clarification on peat.</p>
REP4-134 134.21	<p>6.6 Biodiversity Net Gain / Benefit / Mitigation areas</p> <p>6.6.2 FBC notes the extended discussions around the proposed BNG, biodiversity benefit and mitigation areas.</p>	<p>With regard to the requirements for terrestrial ecological mitigation and biodiversity benefit, all of the land within the areas proposed to be used for these purposes has been surveyed (see S_D4_12 Annex 3.3: Applicants' response to ExQ1 6.1.1: Phase 1 Habitat Survey Coverage -</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	<p>6.6.3 FBC raised concerns about the amount of land identified for these purposes which has not been surveyed. FBC considers that it is not possible to understand the carrying capacity and overall suitability of land, without carrying out an appropriate level of surveys. At present, the high level of uncertainty increases risk, giving rise to an increase in likely harm.</p>	<p>Rev 01 (REP4-116)). There are various proposals for biodiversity enhancements for terrestrial ecology including the creation of new ponds, hedgerows, scrub, woodland and species-rich grassland – these measures are commonly delivered for development projects, and the land proposed is considered suitable for the successful delivery of such habitats.</p> <p>Responses related to bird mitigation and carrying capacity are provided in REP4-134.9 above.</p>
REP4-134 134.22	<p>7 Dunes</p> <p>7.1 Sand Dunes – Various matters</p> <p>7.1.2 FBC notes that ExA Questions Q8.1.1-Q8.1.6 relate to geology, hydrology and ground conditions at, where these questions relate to the dunes area.</p> <p>7.1.3 These questions were directed towards Natural England, the Environment Agency, Lancashire County Council and the Marine Management Organisation, and that each of these organisations have provided written responses to these questions.</p> <p>7.1.4 FBC provides comments here which it considers align with submissions already made by these other key parties.</p>	<p>The Applicants note FBC's response.</p>
REP4-134 134.23	<p>7.2 Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment</p> <p>7.2.2 At ISH2, the ExA invited FBC to comment on matters relating to the Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment of Lytham St Annes Dunes SSSI [REP3-061].</p> <p>7.2.3 FBC notes that Section 6.1.1.4 of the Risk Assessment [REP3-061] sets out that there is high risk of permanent impact to the water table through the presence of the cables if not placed within the layers of low permeability glacial clays. FBC considers that high risk is not acceptable, and it is recommended that the secondary mitigation is moved to embedded mitigation to reduce this to a low-risk outcome.</p> <p>7.2.4 The Risk Assessment also sets out that the impacts of water abstraction from the golf course are still unknown, with further</p>	<p>The findings of the Outline Hydrogeological Risk Assessment (oHyRA) is based on limited site-specific data, albeit with high confidence on the broader hydrogeological conceptual setting of the SSSI. The reported high risk is reflecting the high sensitivity of the hydrogeological regime with respect to the presence and potential permeance of dune slacks.</p> <p>The Applicants are unable to make the commitment to ensure the offshore export cables are installed within the clay layer at this stage as detailed design has not been undertaken yet. However, the Applicants have made a commitment (CoT128 of Annex 5.3: Commitments register (REP4-019) to develop a detailed hydrogeological risk assessment in line with the outline hydrogeological risk assessment. This is secured by Requirement 8 within Schedules 2A and 2B of the draft DCO (REP4-007). Detailed CoCP(s) will be developed in accordance with the Outline</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	<p>investigation needed determine the potential cumulative effect on the SSSI and LNR.</p> <p>7.2.5 FBC notes the comments made by the Environment Agency at ISH2, stating that they are working to review the Risk Assessment but would like to see further consideration of risk arising from the golf course extraction and further details about the conceptual model used, alongside other requests.</p> <p>7.2.6 FBC remains significantly concerned that hydrogeological risks could arise, with impacts upon the structure and stability of the sand dunes, either directly or indirectly, in turn impacting harmfully upon the SSSI, the habitat of sand lizards (a protected species), the recreational value and the landscape, visual quality and value of the area as a tranquil place.</p> <p>7.2.7 Whilst the indication from the Environment Agency that these issues are being worked on is acknowledged, FBC raises concerns about the such important issues being left far into the Examination period – the less time remaining in the Examination, the less time there is for new information to be consulted upon and for findings to properly impact the proposals and associated mitigation. Indeed, FBC notes that the applicants' Physical Processes chapter [APP-042] acknowledges a detailed request made by Natural England in November 2023 for information relating to these matters.</p>	<p>CoCP and approved by the local planning authority in consultation with Fylde Borough Council.</p> <p>The oHyRA has recommended that one of the potential mitigation options could be gathering further site-specific data to inform the detailed Hydrogeological Risk Assessments, which must be produced further to Requirement 8 of Schedules 2A and 2B of the draft DCO (REP4-007). Following the receipt of further ground investigation information appraisal of the risks will be undertaken again.</p> <p>The temporary dewatering potentially required for construction of the transition joint bay (TJB) has been conservatively assessed in the oHyRA and predicted to have a low impact.</p>
REP4-134 134.24	<p>7.3 Sand-winning access (ExA Action Point 16)</p> <p>7.3.2 The applicants' proposals include the use of the decommissioned sand-winning compound and adjacent access which runs between Clifton Drive North and the beach, as little as approximately 10m to the south of the Thursby Care Home site.</p> <p>7.3.3 During ISH2, in association with discussion around impacts on sand lizards, the applicants stated that their use of the decommissioned sand-winning compound and adjacent access would not give rise to greater impacts on the sand lizards or their habitat, when compared to impacts arising from current activity in this area. FBC expressed doubt, on the basis that the compound has long been decommissioned and</p>	<p>The Applicants have prepared and submitted an Outline Sand Lizard Mitigation Plan as an appendix to the Outline Ecology Management Plan (OEMP) (S_D4_14/F02) that further clarifies the risks to sand lizard/ sand lizard habitats during construction and sets out the avoidance and mitigation measures to be adopted. It is the Applicant's position that the avoidance and mitigation measures detailed in this Plan are sufficient to result in no significant impact on the sand lizard population as a result of the proposed construction activities. However, the Applicants have prepared a draft licence based on feedback received from Natural England (S_D5_16).</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	<p>vehicular activity around this area is limited. The ExA directed FBC to submit details of its existing use and activity in this area.</p> <p>7.3.4 The existing access is predominantly used for recreational pedestrian activity. Vehicular access along the track by FBC is limited to the seaward entrance up to the decommissioned compound. The entrance from Clifton Drive North is not used by any FBC department.</p> <p>7.3.5 Activity is for the purpose of sand clearance two or three times per month, as well as for ad hoc fence maintenance. Vehicular access associated with these activities is made by the following vehicles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Deere 5090M (tractor) • John Deere 6130M (tractor) • Ford Ranger (pick-up truck); and, • John Deere Gator (small utility vehicle). <p>7.3.6 HMS Coastguard have also confirmed that their main access to the beach in this area is via the North Beach car park and not this sand-winning access. The sandwinning track would only be used by the Coastguard for emergency access to the beach associated with large-scale emergency incidents.</p> <p>7.3.7 FBC has consistently made comments relating to this issue at page three of its Relevant Reps [RR-0705], Section 10.4 of its Local Impact Report [REP1-078] and Q6.1.6 of its Answers to Questions [REP3-082]. FBC notes submission from other parties in relation to this matter, notably including Natural England, Wildlife Trusts and the Environment Agency. Indeed, the Natural England response to Q6.1.6 [REP3-095] is very clear in this regard.</p> <p>7.3.8 FBC maintains its position that the proposed use of the sand-winning compound and adjacent access route would significantly exceed the current area, intensity, duration and frequency of current uses.</p> <p>7.3.9 FBC also maintains its position that the proposals have the potential to cause impacts on sand lizards and that further detailed information is required to enable proper assessment and management.</p> <p>7.3.10 The applicants have not reflected the current concentration of sand lizards near the sand-winning compound and proposed access</p>	<p>The Applicants have previously engaged and will continue to proactively engage with FBC on the use of the sand-winning compound and access track.</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	<p>route. This omission ignores a vital area of known activity and increases risk to the population. Proposed use of the sand winning track by vehicles and machinery raises major concerns about vibration disturbance to sand lizards, especially in spring when burrows and nesting chambers are active and highly susceptible to collapse. Furthermore, the dunes area mobile and the width of the access varies, raising concerns that activities in this area may directly damage the sand lizard habitat.</p> <p>7.3.11 FBC notes with concern that the applicants set out in their response to question Q6.1.7 [REP3-056] that <i>"No impacts to sand lizards are predicted, either directly through habitat damage/ destruction or indirectly through disturbance; construction activities are therefore not considered to require an EPS licence for sand lizard."</i> The applicants set out a similar position in section 10.3.2 of its response to the FBC Local Impact Report [REP2-038].</p> <p>7.3.12 The applicants' position reflects a significant deficiency in their assessment and the significance attached to the potential impacts on sand lizards and their habitat.</p> <p>7.3.13 FBC and other relevant parties are in the position of having raised concerns, with the applicants appearing to be unwilling or unable to provide the information necessary to enable an assessment of the likely impacts.</p> <p>7.3.14 In the absence of this information and with due regard to the written submissions made by Natural England and other relevant parties, FBC objects strongly to the proposals on the basis that the Environmental Statement does not set out any effects on protected species and habitats, in accordance with Section 5.4.17 of EN-1.</p>	
REP4-134 134.25	<p>7.4 Physical Processes</p> <p>7.4.2 FBC notes ExA Question Q7.1.6 and the Natural England response to the same [REP3-095]. Natural England maintains the request for additional information and assessment. FBC agrees with the comments made by Natural England but wishes to provide further relevant information in support of these requests.</p>	<p>The Applicants provided the additional information requested by Natural England in their response to ExA Q7.1.6 in the Applicants' Response to Deadline 3 submissions from Statutory Consultees and other organisation: Natural England (REP4-100) submitted at Deadline 4. Furthermore, an updated Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical Process has been submitted at Deadline 5 (F2.2.1/F02) which includes this data and provides sufficient detail on the location and design of the cables and associated protection to support the determination that impacts for</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	<p>7.4.3 FBC has made relevant comments most notably within Section 10.1 of its Local Impact Report [REP2-038] with regards to the function and protection of the dunes. One of the key objectives of Council activity in this area is to improve the efficiency of the dunes as a soft sea defence, essential for the delivery of the Environment Agency Shoreline Management Plan (Unit 11B1.21). This is completed through active management realignment techniques to accrete the dune system seawards.</p> <p>7.4.4 This work is only possible due to the sediment gains that are seen from Starr Gate to the mouth of the Ribble Estuary. If sediment transport systems are interrupted this could impact accretion rates and the effectiveness of the management techniques leading to weakening of the dune system for coastal defence. Major disruption would result in sediment gain being reversed and coastal erosion occurring and accelerating.</p> <p>7.4.5 Section 5.6.10 of EN-1 sets out a clear requirement for applicants to undertake coastal geomorphological and sediment transfer modelling to predict and understand impacts and help identify relevant mitigating or compensatory measures.</p> <p>7.4.6 FBC notes that it is the opinion of Natural England that this requirement has not been met. FBC further notes that Section 5.6.11 of EN-1 directs applicants to specifically assess implications as they relate to coastal flooding and erosion management.</p> <p>7.4.7 In the absence of this information and with due regard to the written submissions made by Natural England and other relevant parties, FBC objects to the proposals on the basis that the Environmental Statement does not set out any effects on protected species and habitats, in accordance with Section 5.6.10 of EN-1.</p>	<p>sediment transport pathways, including the pathway into the Ribble Estuary, are of negligible to minor significance which is not significant in EIA terms.</p> <p>Natural England's request for information pertained to cable protection parameters in the nearshore. With particular reference to details of the location, volumes, orientation and type of cable protection between Lowest Astronomical Tide (LAT) and the Depth of Closure (DoC) to enable understanding of the impact on nearshore sediment transport processes. The DoC is located where bed level is circa 10m below Chart Datum (CD).</p> <p>The Outline CBRA (APP-219) and the Outline CSIP (REP2-022) confirms that due to the sediment type and depth found in the nearshore area extending to the DoC and the Fylde MCZ (i.e. predominantly sand and mud), traditional burial techniques are suitable to achieve the target burial depths and commitment CoT54 (REP4-018) 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.</p> <p>However, in the unlikely event that burial to the target depth is not achievable, commitment CoT45 (REP4-018) 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). 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 0.3 m in height, which are specifically designed to allow sediment transport to continue unhindered and at water depths of less than 5 m. Therefore, the potential for any cable protection is effectively none. 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, the Applicants have made the commitment that <i>"no cable/scour protection shall be permanently deployed in the intertidal area between MLWS and MHWS"</i>,</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
		<p>CoT133 (REP4-018) and infrastructure will be buried to a depth of 3 m with reinstatement of the beach following trenching. Therefore, sediment sources and sediment transport into the Ribble Estuary would not be impacted and there would be no disruption to the dune system.</p> <p>It is noted that the advice to undertake numerical modelling from Natural England was on the condition that the Applicants were unable to provide further information at this stage. Similarly, as noted in Volume 2, Chapter 1: Physical Process, Table 1.1, NPS EN-1 Section 5.6, paragraph 5.6.10. states "<i>Where relevant</i>, applicants should undertake coastal geomorphological and sediment transfer modelling to predict and understand impacts and help identify relevant mitigating or compensatory measures". 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, in this case, detailed numerical modelling would not be required.</p> <p>The Applicants also note that the conceptual approach, agreed with Stakeholders through the consultation processes (APP-190), was supported by a number of appropriate studies and modelling campaigns including detailed project specific morphological seabed study (included assessment of historical datasets and modelling (ABPmer 2023). The Applicants submitted the ABPmer report (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 (REP4-122) to support the information provided in the Outline CBRA (APP -219) and the Outline CSIP (REP2 - 022).</p> <p>Implications as they relate to coastal flooding and erosion management have been considered in Volume 3, Chapter 1: Geology, hydrogeology and ground conditions (APP-68) and Volume 3, Chapter 2: Hydrology and flood risk (APP-70). Whilst tidal flooding has been assessed in Volume 3 Annex 2.3: Flood risk assessment – Part 1 of 3 (REP4-020).</p>
REP4-134 134.26	<p>8 Noise, Vibration, and Air Quality</p> <p>8.1.2 At ISH2, FBC informed the ExA about issues with regards to their ability to make comments relating to noise and vibration. In brief, the relevant FBC technical professional advisor was unexpectedly</p>	<p>The Applicants note FBC's response. The conflict of interest has been resolved and there have been meetings held between the Applicant and FBC. The Applicants have responded to written representations</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	<p>unavailable and so at very short notice FBC responded to endeavour to be able to continue to engage with the Examination as scheduled.</p> <p>8.1.3 This issue also had the same impact in terms of matters relating to air quality, on the basis we were relying on TBC Technical Advice to advise on air quality matters, for the same reason.</p> <p>8.1.4 FBC worked hard at speed to resolve its resourcing issue, contacting contractors, other Local Authorities and consultancies in a manner consistent with its ongoing positive and proactive engagement with the examination process. FBC also advised the applicants in advance.</p> <p>8.1.5 We understand the ExA decision to cancel the open floor element and note that the ExA has instructed the applicants at ISH2 Action Point 39 to provide an explanatory note, with input from the relevant parent company regarding how and why the conflict with the FBC-appointed consultant arose.</p> <p>8.1.6 As of 08/08/2025 (i.e. Deadline 4), FBC has now agreed a conflict-of-interest memorandum between all relevant parties and the original consultant has been re-instructed. FBC has continued its proactive approach, having already met with the consultant to agree a refreshed programme of works.</p> <p>8.1.7 FBC still expects to see a response to Action Point 39.</p> <p>8.1.8 The impacts of this issue, besides resourcing pressures for the Local Authority, are that matters relating to noise and vibration could not be discussed at the hearing and that FBC will not be able to make written submissions at Deadline 4.</p> <p>8.1.9 FBC will prepare a written update as soon as possible and in advance of Deadline 5, in accordance with Action Point 28 and including all other noise, vibration and air quality comments.</p>	<p>submitted by FBC to the Applicants and liaising directly with FBC on specific points.</p>
<p>REP4-134 134.27</p>	<p>9 Employment and Skills Plan (ExA Action Point 42)</p> <p>9.1.2 At a high level there is agreement that the DCO Requirement 19 should record the approving authority for the Employment and Skills Plan [ESP] via the 'the Relevant Planning Authority', for the benefit of the</p>	<p>The Applicants note there is a hearing action point with all relevant councils to confirm to the ExA and Applicants who they wish to be the appropriate discharging authority for Requirement 19. Once this has</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	<p>whole of the Fylde Peninsula and adjoining areas and in order to future-proof the DCO drafting in light of proposed local government reform.</p> <p>9.1.3 It is anticipated that the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre -Economic Prosperity Board [EPB] will have a core role in the monitoring and management of the ESP, and the 'relevant planning authority' will be nominated when the need arises. FBC currently chairs and acts as secretariat for the EPB.</p> <p>9.1.4 The EPB is a well-established, constituted group under the Local Government Act 1972, created to deliver economic development and monitoring purposes across the Fylde Peninsula. Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde Councils are all parties to this Board and other members (such as Lancashire County Council and South Ribble Borough Council) can be co-opted as required.</p>	<p>been provided, the Applicants will review the drafting at Requirement 19 in Schedules 2A and 2B of the draft DCO (REP4-007).</p>
<p>REP4-134 134.28</p>	<p>10 Agriculture</p> <p>10.1.2 FBC notes the discussions relating to agricultural land and business impacts at ISH2, ISH3 and CAH2.</p> <p>10.1.3 FBC maintains its position set out in its written submission to date and notes the contributions made by other parties at the hearings, notably including local farmers, the NFU and agricultural related/supported businesses.</p>	<p>The Applicants note FBC's comments.</p>
<p>REP4-134 134.29</p>	<p>10.2 Likely harm arising from duration of works</p> <p>10.2.2 FBC continues to raise concerns about the lack of information and proper commitments with regards to the timing, duration and frequency of impacts in relation to all topic areas but particularly with regards to agricultural impacts.</p> <p>10.2.3 Most recently and with regards to the duration of works, the applicants have responded to ExA Written Question Q1.1.3 [REP3-056], stating that the maximum construction periods would be 30 months for one project and 36 for the other.</p> <p>10.2.4 However, the applicant goes on to acknowledge that that haul roads within the cable corridor may remain in place after the completion of construction activities at a specific location and as a result, therefore reinstatement of land at some locations may not occur until the haul road</p>	<p>The Applicants would refer to the outline Onshore Construction Method Statement (REP4-115) and the response to Hearing Action Point ISH2.38 (REP4-111) within which further detail in relation to the timing, duration and frequency of impacts on land have been set out, in response to concerns raised at Deadline 3 and within Issue Specific Hearing 2.</p> <p>In relation to the potential that haul roads may be in place throughout the duration of the construction period in any given location, the Applicants would emphasise that (with the exception of two discrete shared working areas at St Anne's beach, and at Blackpool Airport) that each of Project A and Project B will be constructed in entirely separate corridors. Each project will have its own separate haul road within its designated construction corridor, and the land within each construction corridor will be reinstated once works for the relevant project in each corridor have</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	<p>is no longer required, which may be once cable testing and commissioning is complete.</p> <p>10.2.5 FBC is concerned that the applicants continue to downplay the likely impacts of the proposals on agricultural land. The applicants set out a response which appears to disagree with concerns being raised but then also includes information which in fact recognises the concerns being raised.</p> <p>10.2.6 As it stands there are no commitments which would actively minimise, manage and mitigate these impacts. In addition to longer impacts from haulage roads, reinstatement is allowed up to one year after works finish. Q1.1.3 states maximum duration for each project is 30 and 36 months, so five years continuous impact on some land is possible per current definitions, with haulage roads lasting much longer.</p>	<p>been completed. The Applicants would emphasise therefore that in relation to the majority of the cable route, the same exact area of land will not be disrupted by both projects, on the basis that the construction corridors for each of Project A and Project B are distinct to one another.</p>
<p>REP4-134 134.30</p>	<p>10.3 Link Boxes</p> <p>10.3.2 At ISH2, the applicants set out a detailed explanation as to the technical limitations and requirements in terms of where link boxes can be located. The applicant sought to use this as justification for retaining maximum flexibility in terms of determining where link boxes would be located within the Order Limits.</p> <p>10.3.3 FBC considers that if the technical requirements and limitations are so well defined, then it should be possible to carry out an assessment of different scenarios to establish likely maximum and minimum commitments with regards to locating link boxes in a way consistent and/or responses to operational requirements of farmers and landowners.</p> <p>10.3.4 FBC considers that the degree of flexibility being sought by the applicants is unjustified and gives to rise to additional increased economic and ecological harm.</p>	<p>The Applicants note FBC's concerns regarding flexibility in the siting of link boxes and joint bays. As explained during ISH2, the distance between link boxes is governed by technical requirements. The Project Description (REP4-008, Table 3.28) sets out the maximum and minimum design parameters for the distance between link boxes. Where ground conditions allow, the longer sections of cable can be installed, which minimises the number of link boxes required within the order limits. However, in steep gradients or tight bends, closer spacing is required to reduced bending and pulling strain on the cables, to ensure compliance with the manufacturer's requirements. Therefore, the flexibility sought by the Applicants is in line with the technical requirements of the onshore cable corridor at the current stage of design.</p> <p>The Applicants' note that it is in their best interests that joint bays and associated link boxes are as close to field boundaries and public roads as practicable to facilitate maintenance access. Final design and location of the link boxes will be determined during detailed design, and where possible, in consultation within Landowners. As mentioned in ISH2, options such as flush or recess installation, as well as market posts can be considered to minimise disruption to agricultural and business activities.</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
REP4-134 134.31	<p>10.4 Agricultural Land Classification</p> <p>10.4.2 FBC maintains its position set out in Section 8 of its Local Impact Report [REP1- 078], with regards to the errors and inadequacy of the applicants' assessment of agricultural land classification and impacts.</p> <p>10.4.3 FBC notes that the applicants have responded to this criticism [REP2-038], stating that their assessment [APP-033] correctly separates its assessment of agricultural land classification but this is not correct. The applicants have clearly grouped them together, as per Table 4.6 [APP-033].</p> <p>10.4.4 The applicants' Environmental Statement chapter on Land Use and Recreation [APP-104] concludes that sensitivity of agricultural land as a receptor is high and that temporary effects would result in medium moderate adverse impacts, and permanent effects in low minor adverse impacts.</p> <p>10.4.5 It is clear that the applicants cannot have given proper consideration to alternatives which would lower impacts on higher quality land, as a result of the deficiencies in their baseline assessment.</p> <p>10.4.6 FBC considers that the applicants' assessment is flawed in this regard and that the assessment of harm arising from the subsequent site and route selection is therefore also flawed.</p>	<p>The Applicants' response to these points was provided during ISH 2 Day 2 and is provided in response to questions raised under Item 7c – Loss of Best and Most Versatile Land in the Applicants' Hearing Summary of the Issue Specific Hearing2: Day 2 (REP4-104). The Applicants note that while there are still areas of disagreement with regard to land use and recreation with FBC, the following points have been agreed within the FBC SoCG (S_D1_6.3/F02):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation – FBC confirm that the consultation for land use and recreation has been adequate. • Policy and planning - FBC confirms that the Applicants have identified the relevant adopted plans and policies within their assessment. • Scoping - FBC confirm their agreement on the impacts scoped into the assessment for land use and recreation. • Study area - FBC confirms that the geographical extent of the land use and recreation study area is appropriate. • CEA assessment methodology - FBC agree that the list of projects screened into the CEA is appropriate.
REP4-134 134.32	<p>11 New / Recently Consented Development update</p> <p>11.1.2 FBC most recently provided an update on new and recently consented developments in response to ExA Written Question Q1.3.1 [REP3-082].</p> <p>11.1.3 FBC is writing to provide an update on the progress of the two solar farm applications identified in their previous submission.</p> <p>- Application 24/0541 at land to the west of Parrox Lane: liaison between the applicant and the Highway Authority is ongoing, with an exchange of information as recently as 07/08/2025. It is understood that the applicant will provide an Environmental Statement chapter including consideration of cumulative highways and landscape impacts with the Morgan and Morecambe wind farm transmission assets NSIP application.</p>	<p>The Applicants note this response and point FBC to REP3-082-2.6 in 'S_D4_2.3 Annex 2.3 to Applicants' Response to Deadline 3 submissions from Statutory Consultees and other organisation: Fylde Borough Council (REP3-082) - Rev F01' (REP4-097) where the Applicants' current position with regard to the consideration of Planning Applications 24/0541 and 24/0414 highlighted by FBC. An update to the CEA longlists was undertaken for Deadline 1 and included in Volume 1, Annex 5.5: Cumulative effects screening matrix and location plan (REP1-020) to take account of applications submitted since submission as well as where previously identified applications status' have changed. The two schemes highlighted 24/0414 and 24/0541 have been included as part of these updates and screened into assessments for onshore and intertidal ornithology and onshore ecology and nature conservation.</p>

Reference	IP submission	Applicants' response
	<p>- Application 24/0414 at Clifton Marsh Farm: an updated Environmental Statement was received the week commencing 04/08/2025 and a reconsultation has been issued</p>	<p>An update to the assessment of cumulative effects was submitted at Deadline 2 which identified that there is no change to the conclusions of the Environmental Statement (REP2-043). It is noted that Volume 1, Annex 5.5: Cumulative effects screening matrix and location plan (REP1-020) is subject to review and will take account of any change in status of schemes or where updated assessment information has been submitted. If updates to the CEA matrix require assessment updates, these will be undertaken and submitted as appropriate. It should be noted that there will not be a submission of a separate Environmental Statement chapter with regard to cumulative effects, rather updated versions of Volume 1, Annex 5.5: Cumulative effects screening matrix and location plan (REP1-020) and S_D2_10 Review of Cumulative Effects Assessment and In-Combination Assessment at Deadline 2 Rev F01 (REP2-043) will be submitted where appropriate.</p>