

# **REPRESENTATION ON THE PROPOSED MORGAN AND MORECAMBE OFFSHORE WIND FARMS TRANSMISSION ASSETS DCO**

**PLANNING INSPECTORATE REFERENCE NUMBER: EN020028**

## **Submission on behalf of Newton with Clifton and Freckleton Parish Councils**

### **Summary of case presented at Issue Specific Hearing 4 on 7-8 October 2025 and actions arising**

1. This is the response from Newton with Clifton and Freckleton Parish Councils on behalf of the Transmission Assets Steering Committee which comprises of the following Parish and Town Councils which cover the entirety of the route in Fylde:
  - Newton with Clifton Parish Council
  - Freckleton Parish Council
  - Kirkham Town Council
  - Treales, Roseacre and Wharles Parish Council
  - Ribby with Wrea Parish Council
  - Weeton with Preece Parish Council
  - Westby-with-Plumpton Parish Council
  - St Annes Town Council
  - Bryning with Warton Parish Council

And the Newton Residents Association

### **Deadline 6 submission**

### **Volume of Information**

2. We support concerns raised by Fylde BC at the hearing about the volume of material being submitted at this late stage of the process. This undermines our ability to respond to the sheer amount of detail being provided and shows that the preparation for the application, and the application itself is seriously flawed.

### **Number of unresolved issues**

3. At the hearings we also noted the high number of outstanding issues to be resolved including those of Blackpool Airport Properties Limited aired at the Compulsory Acquisition hearing and the recent response from the Duchy of Lancaster. Both of these raise concerns with the negotiating approach by the applicants and the extent of either the powers or agreements sought.

### **Failure to consider updates on the Alternative Route**

4. We remain disappointed that the Examining Authority has not allowed us, and others, the opportunity to directly address the issue of the obviously material Alternative Route at an Issue Specific Hearing. Although we accept that this is a primarily written process, we believe that this issue is important enough to merit oral submissions to allow its adequate examination and for the parish councils to have a fair chance to put their case (see s91(1) of the Planning Act 2008).

5. This has denied us the opportunity to update the Examining Authority about developments with OFGEM and their continuing failure to address issues about the lack of consideration of Stanah in the Holistic Network Review and their responsibilities under EN5 and the Electricity Act 1989. The consideration of connecting at Penwortham had no element of public consultation and yet pre-determines that the onshore cables are ten times as long as they need to be. Indeed, at no point have our communities had the opportunity to be consulted, engaged nor have had the opportunity to challenge the decision to ignore Stanah and go straight to Penwortham. Given the savings of £904m for the Morgan and Morecambe route alone, and a total of £1.5 bn including Mooir Vannin, this is disappointing to say the least. So we are forced to place our trust in this process with the Examining Authority to recognise that a serious mistake has been made and there is an obviously materially advantageous alternative.
6. However we do note that the Examining Authority have now visited sites on the alternative route as we have requested. This is welcome. There are some additional points we would like to raise which may not have been obvious from the site inspection and could have been made had it been an accompanied site inspection:
  - a. From public accessible land the Examining Authority will not have been able to see the fact that there is already a shared electricity transmission infrastructure boundary with HTEZ and Stanah, the existing Walney 2 (and other DNO) transmission infrastructure demonstrating the feasibility and the vast space for further transmission infrastructure.
  - b. The Examining Authority will have not been able to see at first hand the available compliant development Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone land, demonstrating that there are Very Special Circumstances do not exist to override the conflict with and build over the South Fylde Green Belt.... and of course that this avoids the marine environmental conflict with the Ribble & Alt SPA and avoids the 13km zones around both Blackpool passenger airport and Warton passenger airport & military airfield operations to avoid the consequential bird-strike risk to life.
  - c. The protected route into HTEZ for the proposed Northern Access road - which could be used as an access route into HTEZ for cabling - would also not have been clear.
  - d. The footpath to the south of the Cala Grand holiday park, which is a further important cabling access route option.

## **Non-Compliance with NESO's Approach to Government**

7. The current strategy, supported by NESO and National Grid NGET, involves the construction of multiple new underground cable routes inland—totalling seven trenches of over 30km each. This approach disregards the potential coastal connection point and the use of the 400kV Heysham Ring, which links Stanah, Heysham, Penwortham, and national consumers. Critically, this strategy is in conflict with NESO's stated policy, which prioritises maximising and upgrading the existing network before considering the development of new lines. Reference to NESO Clean Power 2030 (section 5.2 and Annex 1) confirms that new lines should only be considered once existing infrastructure capacity is exhausted.
8. Stanah has repeatedly been shortlisted ahead of Penwortham as a connection point since 2008, as evidenced by National Grid's input into the offshore Strategic Environmental Assessments, Celtic Array, Moorside, Walney Extension, and Walney 2 projects. Notably, the Walney 2 project in 2012

utilised the Stanah connection and Hillhouse Technical Enterprise Zone to host transmission infrastructure, which was subsequently linked to the Irish Sea shore.

### **Non-Compliance with HNDR Recommendation Assumptions**

9. NESO's support for the connection to Penwortham and the developers' proposals rely on assumptions set out in the Holistic Network Design Review (HNDR), yet the recommended approach of shared cable corridor, shared substation and export cable is not being implemented. There has been no reassessment by NESO despite significant changes: the cable corridor, substation, and export cable are no longer shared, leading to increased environmental impacts (such as on the Ribble & Alt SPA), greater loss of Green Belt land, heightened bird strike risks, business blight, and the proliferation of network connections.
10. The HNDR Report lacks any assessment against the objectives of the Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR), which should cover cost, deliverability, environmental impact, and community impact. The only assessment provided is a technical comparison (table 39), and Penwortham is rated amber for all four parameters in the HNDR. However, based on the presence of both a passenger airport and military airfield, a red rating should apply (table 40), indicating the need for mitigation solutions. The National Policy Statement (NPS) requires a birdstrike assessment, yet the ongoing failure to address this risk highlights a lack of process compliance. Additionally, there has been no assessment of Green Belt impact.

### **Cumulative Impacts and Lack of Coordination**

11. The HNDR has omitted consideration of the 1.32GW Mooir Vannin EISTP, raising questions about how Ofgem ensures the system remains efficient, coordinated, and economic.

### **Sustainability of Upgrades**

12. Energy systems are sized to meet historical demand levels. National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) has submitted to the M&M ExA that Penwortham requires upgrades to accommodate projects such as Morgan, Morecambe, and others, necessitating the compulsory purchase of South Ribble Greenbelt. This does not account for the requirements of Mooir Vannin EISTP. Upgrading Stanah to meet new demand would be equally justifiable, given that the NGET Stanah site has open access to HTEZ, which itself has a 138 hectare site nationally approved to support the energy sector, yet it is being used to discount Stanah. This site could host new transmission infrastructure, eliminating environmental, community, and birdstrike risks and reducing network connections. This challenges NGET's claim that Stanah lacks access or capacity for new transmission infrastructure. No consistent, contemporary, or complete assessments have been produced for routes involving Penwortham/Greenbelt and Stanah/HTEZ connection points.

### **Adequacy of Coordination and System-Wide Perspective**

13. There appears to be a lack of system-wide consideration and coordination. The loss of 2.4GW of base load from decommissioning of Heysham 1 & 2 nuclear power plants, missed opportunities to provide green hydrogen energy balancing infrastructure (by leveraging the existing but unimplemented DCO at Thornton – the Preesall Underground Gas Storage Facility Order 2015), and potential for local use of landed power are notable. The adoption of a regulatory sandbox framework could enable delivery that is faster, smarter, and £1.5bn cheaper.

## **Imbalance of Harms Over Benefits: Lack of Critical National Priority status**

14. The current approach, as stated in public submissions by the three projects, will not achieve the 2030 Government objective. These projects, with capacities between 0.48GW and 1.5GW, would contribute only 1%-3% of the Government's 50GW 2030 offshore wind target and just 0.06%-0.2% of the oversubscribed 750GW pipeline of connections. The associated harms, which outweigh the benefits of this project, mean that it is not a project of critical national priority.

## **Stanah/HTEZ: The Obviously Material Superior Alternative**

15. A transmission route via Stanah/HTEZ and the 400kV Heysham Ring offers several significant advantages:
- a. Utilises and reinforces the existing transmission network, avoiding surface development on Greenbelt land and countryside, in alignment with NESO's guidance to Government.
  - b. Reduces costs and carbon emissions by eliminating the need for seven cable sets of 30km each for the three projects, serving consumer interests and economic duty.
  - c. Avoids birdstrike risk to life, being over 13km from both passenger airport and military airfield operations.
  - d. Landfall does not conflict with marine protected environments, including Ribble & Alt SPA, which are impacted by M&M's proposal.
  - e. Supports regeneration opportunities, including local low-cost power use, green hydrogen for energy balancing, environmental enhancement, land remediation, and future Greenbelt protection.
  - f. Avoids £1.5bn of unnecessary costs to investors and consumer bills, reduces activities and risks, and facilitates progress for developers, communities, and government in the Net Zero transition.

## **Addressing Claims of No Less Harmful Alternatives**

16. Despite assertions from M&M that no less harmful approaches exist, Orsted has acknowledged the potential benefits of a Stanah connection, stating they are willing to reconsider HTEZ if not penalised by Ofgem/NESO. Orsted has also proposed two landfall sites that avoid the Ribble & Alt marine SPA, directly contradicting M&M's claims. Furthermore, Orsted has identified sites within 5km of Penwortham for surface converter stations and energy balancing infrastructure, which would avoid the South Fylde Greenbelt, undermining claims that building over the Greenbelt is unavoidable due to "very special circumstances."

## **Conclusion: The Stanah/HTEZ/Heysham Ring Route**

17. The Stanah/HTEZ/Heysham Ring route stands out as the faster, smarter, and £1.5bn cheaper solution, addressing environmental, community, and economic concerns while supporting rapid progress towards Net Zero.

## **Noise**

18. We have always understood the balance between hours of operation and the length of the proposed construction works and its impact on local residents. We have come to the conclusion that 6am for implementation works and 7am for construction works is too early and agree with Fylde BC that an 8am start would allow local residents the opportunity for a full night's rest.

19. In addition we support the change giving the Local Authority 48 hours' notice of extended works and request this be extended to all affected residents, businesses and schools and that further consideration be given to the impact on children during school hours.

## Lighting

20. We have received information from the Civil Aviation Authority showing that the Applicants' assertion that they are responsible for deciding upon lighting on masts is wrong, and that instead that this is a matter for the two airfields. We attach that advice at Annex A.

## Landscape

21. We have repeatedly criticised the Applicants for failing to provide 3-D models or landscape renderings of the substations. This dates back to at least November 2023 when the viewpoints in the photographs were from vantages away from people homes, and in any case did not show the impact of the substations, as well there being no legible maps – local people resorted to making their own so they could see where the substations were. Indeed the Mooir Vannin applicants in their Approach to Consultation document have already indicated they may use interactive GIS mapping to digitally capture geographically specific data, including for Issue specific working groups, both denied to us by the applicant.
22. This information would have allowed local communities to understand and comment upon the design of the substation. This is in line with the Design Principles for National Infrastructure, quoted by the applicant:
- “The range of views of communities affected by the infrastructure must be taken into account and reflected in the design.”*
23. The Applicants say *“The Applicants have ..... sought the views of local communities throughout the project to ensure the design complements the local character and culture and provides meaningful benefits to local communities.”* That is not the case.
24. For the second time the Applicants have claimed local resident feedback helped them with their decision on siting of the substations. Again this is not true. Local residents were repeatedly denied the ability to understand the impact of the substations, including siting options, and denied the opportunity to comment meaningfully.
25. In current versions there has been glacial progress – we now have photos from 4 local viewpoints but there remain no representations of the substations themselves, or the visual impact this will have on our communities. This means there are no indications either of the possible heights of the substations, or the different design of the Morecambe substation which is still undecided between AIS and GIS. Indeed the height of the Morgan substation is still not agreed- so it is still unclear whether the Morgan substation is on top of, or built within the slope rising from Dow Brook, which makes a major impact on local residents overlooking the substation. Instead the height is proposed for post consent subject to planning authority approval.
26. So we are nearing the end of this process and we still do not have full viewpoint representations for local communities to consider and offer views on, let alone have those views taken into account. Likewise you too as the Examining Authority have shared that experience of no illustrative

viewpoints with representations of substations, no opportunity to offer views and the decision being taken after this examination. We consider that this means the environmental assessment is incomplete and the consultation undertaken has been inadequate.

27. In addition we note with concern that the substations are still proposed to be maximum design scenario without any recourse to local communities challenging their size on an informed basis.
28. We note the offer of a model by the Applicants, but this should have been in place for the 2023 consultation, and certainly before now in this process. The model should have been offered far earlier in this process, and with proper views points to comply with the Design Principles for National Infrastructure. In our recent conversations with the applicant they indicated that even the offer of a model was under consideration by them and not agreed.
29. All of this is in addition to the fact that the Maximum Design Scenario for the Applicants' substations are far larger than those for equivalent schemes. There has been no explanation for the huge amount of land required by the applicants for their onshore substations.

### **Cumulative Effects Assessment**

30. As mentioned in our previous submissions we remain concerned at the potential for overlap between the construction periods and use of land for the Applicants' proposal and proposed Bluefield's solar farm. Given that this focuses on the sensitive and dangerous use of Lower Lane, and the Eeka Lane which has cattle crossing, horse and pedestrian traffic and construction traffic for both schemes all potentially running at the same time. This is unacceptable.

### **Construction Accesses**

31. See Annex B for a letter from Sue Ashton, vice-chair of Westby-with-Plumpton Parish Council, on the issue of construction accesses.

### **Blackpool Road Recreation Ground**

32. See Annex C for submissions from Cllr Joanne Gardner, Fylde Borough Council Councillor for Kilnhouse Ward, on the issue of the Blackpool Road Recreation Ground.

### **Freckleton Road Bridleway**

33. See Annex D for submissions from Cllrs Keith Mackay and Noreen Griffiths about the Freckleton Road Bridleway.

### **Wrea Green Equitation Centre**

34. We welcome the creation of a communication protocol and as set out later, welcome its introduction for other stakeholders.

### **Outstanding agricultural land-use and farming matters**

35. See Annex E for submissions from Cllr Keith Mackay on agricultural land use and farming matters.



**1) Project results in a net loss to biodiversity**

36. For the first time in this examination, we see the true effect of the project on biodiversity. Table 3 on pages 15-16 of REP5-145 shows the true baseline within the whole of the order limits rather than just for the proposed permanent infrastructure.
37. Before mitigation, the project causes a loss of 447.46 area units, 16.52 hedgerow units and 90.03 water units. The proposed mitigation can be found in tables 1.6, 1.7 and 1.8 of the Biodiversity Benefit Statement (REP5-074) and amounts to an increase of 79.85 area units, 12.32 hedgerow units and 4.07 watercourse units.
38. This means that the project as proposed represents a net loss of biodiversity of:
- $447.46 - 79.85 = 367.61$  area units, or a 14.1% loss, and
  - $16.52 - 12.32 = 4.2$  hedgerow units, or a 3.93% loss, and
  - $90.03 - 4.07 = 85.96$  watercourse units, or a 47.64% loss
39. Since the project will only be constructed within a corridor that is likely to be narrower than the order limits, it is likely that the eventual figure will be lower, but given the scale of area and watercourse losses in particular is still very likely to result in a net loss.
40. Not stated at the hearing, but a consequence of this: *If the Examining Authority recommend and the Secretary of State approve this project then this is likely to be in contravention of the revised duty under s40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, since recommending approval or approving this project would not conserve or enhance biodiversity. Unlike BNG for NSIPs, this has been in force since 1 January 2023.*

**2) There are threats to highly valuable habitats**

41. Checking the metric for Morgan ([REP5-151](#)) as an example (the overall metric document has blanks for the habitats), one can see the following:
- 20.5 hectares of 'irreplaceable' habitat is listed (coastal sand dunes), and
  - 26.9 hectares of 'very high distinctiveness' habitats (fens (upland and lowland), and purple moor grass and rush pastures) are listed
42. It is possible – and likely in the first case – that these habitats will be drilled underneath rather than subject to cut and cover construction and hence will be unaffected, but as we heard in relation to peat, the ends of any HDD section will be at the surface and could intrude upon these habitats, plus there is a disagreement between the Applicants and Natural England about the depth of drilling under the sand dunes to avoid any effects on them. Essentially from the information provided at this late stage we just don't know whether irreplaceable habitat – which is so valuable as to require its own mitigation and is outside the BNG regime – and very high distinctiveness habitat – which requires bespoke compensation even within the BNG regime – will be affected.
43. If the Applicants had considered BNG properly throughout this process, including as early as site selection, then they may have avoided or reduced the impact on these valuable habitats but do not appear to have done so.

### ***3) The other DCOs cited as similar are not in fact similar***

44. At paragraph 3.2.1.4 the document states that only considering permanent infrastructure is similar to the approach taken for other DCOs but this is simply not true. Without even checking the projects themselves, one can ascertain from Table 4 on pages 18-20 that:

- Rampion 2 assessed all permanent and temporary land take;
- North Falls did not consider losses taking more than two years to restore as temporary and did exclude HDD areas;
- Dogger Bank South excluded HDD areas;
- Outer Dowsing excluded HDD areas.

45. The last two reported a small net loss of area habitat.

### ***4) The 'temporary' impacts to habitats on this project are very long***

46. The Applicants have given the impression that the impacts to habitats on the cable route are short in duration, even if not short enough to fall under the two-year exemption.

47. The test is that the time from when the habitat is first lost to when it is fully restored to its originally-assessed condition must be less than two years. In fact on this project this will be much longer.

48. The use of the land for the projects themselves will be long, even if any particular section will have a relatively short construction time, because the Applicants have reserved for themselves a gap of up to four years between constructing the two projects. Even if the project is not delayed, if the construction time at any particular site is one year per project that could mean six years of loss, and could be significantly longer if the project is delayed or construction time at a site is longer than a year.

49. On top of that is the time that the metric says each habitat will take to restore to its original condition. Along the route this ranges from urban habitats that take no time to restore, to rarer habitats that take 30 years to restore, such as woodland and fens. Essentially only urban habitats, cereal crops and littoral sand from the identified habitats take less than three years to restore.

50. Given that the BNG obligation is only to maintain an enhanced habitat for 30 years, it seems highly inappropriate to consider the loss of habitat for longer than that as 'temporary'.

### ***5) Trading rules affect replacement habitats***

51. Paragraph 4.1.1.4 suggests that all lost habitats could be replaced by enhancing modified grassland in poor condition with other neutral grassland in moderate condition but this is not possible for habitats of medium or higher distinctiveness – they should be replaced with habitat in the same habitat group if they are medium, the exact same habitat if high, and subject to bespoke compensation if very high.

### ***6) The proposed hierarchy is flawed***

52. The proposed hierarchy at Table 5 on pages 21-22, reflected in the proposed requirement 26 that was circulated on the evening of 7 October, roughly corresponds to the official biodiversity



hierarchy at Article 37A of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) 2015.

53. However, option 3, or part (b) of the requirement, is extremely vague – it does not appear to fulfil the tests of enforceable and precise for a planning condition. It is the equivalent in the official hierarchy of offsite BNG, and our case is that this project should also have to secure registered offsite BNG for any BNG that is not either onsite or being satisfied by buying statutory credits. Although BNG is not yet a legal requirement for DCO applications, land on the register has been allocated to town and country planning projects that were approved before the BNG obligation applied to that regime and so this is possible to achieve. For other comments on the proposed requirement, see under the DCO section.

## Aviation

54. We have discovered a fundamental failing in the Applicants site selection process. When they used their black/red/amber/green (BRAG) assessment, they used an Amber rating for both Blackpool and Warton airfields. We understand that this is because they believed that Blackpool has no passenger traffic and Warton was a private airfield.
55. However Blackpool is classed as passenger carrying, and is one of the 34 listed passenger airfields. This would require it to be rated it as Red in the BRAG methodology.
56. Warton is classed as private but operates a military type licence, with the fast jets using the aerodrome being military and armed on every flight. Military Operation Airfields are all classed as Red in the BRAG methodology.
57. So the BRAG assessment for site selection is fundamentally flawed and the current substation sites should never have been considered. The whole story of consideration of the effects of the project on the airport and aerodrome is one of too little, too late.
58. If the Applicants do succeed in satisfying BAe Systems with respect to bird strike risk at Warton Aerodrome, then this should not be at the expense of reduced environmental mitigation, especially if that fails fully to mitigate environmental harms. The measures at Table 1-4 of Appendix A (the Outline Wildlife Habitat Attractants Risk Assessment) of the Outline Wildlife Hazard Management Plan (REP5-106) do appear to degrade the habitats so that e.g. ponds have less biodiverse edges, trees are kept short etc.
59. The suitability of these mitigation areas should be reassessed assuming the worst case of having to implement the measures to control attraction. Presumably there is no longer time to do this so it will either have to be done for the decision period or will remain an incompletely assessed area.
60. NFPC.OE.8 – the ecology assessment was inadequate as the risk of bird strike from the two aviation facilities was not taken into account. Those discussions remain deadlocked and expose a fundamental flaw in the application which results from it being prematurely rushed through. The issues with BAe Systems should have been discussed in advance of the application being submitted. The applicants in their rush to avoid BNG have ended up with a fundamental and irresolvable dilemma around both claiming to support environmental net gain and yet denying it for BAe Systems.

61. The parish councils note that BAE Systems are not the only body concerned about the birdstrike Issue. This is a major concern to those Parish and Town Councils that lie under the possible flight paths, as follows:
- When a strike occurs, there may be damage to the aircraft, which hopefully can land safely with no further concern.
  - If the aircraft or crew are damaged, then control may be lost, in which case the crew may eject and land safely, but the aircraft trajectory will be uncertain and may result in a crash on land or at sea.
  - This raises a third party risk of death to those on the ground.
  - Anything that knowingly increases this risk has to be prevented

## **Draft Development Consent Order**

### ***Article 13***

62. At the Open Floor Hearing on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025 (01:55:14:21 - 01:55:46:07) the Applicants stated that there would be no road closures ; in that case, why do article 13 and schedules 4A and 4B allow a number of public roads to be closed?
63. Even if there are no road closures, that doesn't mean there won't be significant disruption and delays due to temporary lights and use of banksmen which will cause significant adverse impacts for residents and businesses.

### ***Article 47***

64. We suggest that this article be amended to address the situation identified in the *Hillside* Supreme Court case, i.e. that implementing a subsequent incompatible planning permission prevents the original permission from continuing to be implemented, e.g. by adding to paragraph (1) words to the effect of 'and the continuing implementation of this Order is not prevented by the implementation of such planning permission'.

### ***Requirement 1***

65. We stand by our drafting to require the second project to start within six months of the first one (without restricting when that can start during the overall time period). Failing that we would prefer Mr Cliff's suggestion of two years rather than six months, and failing that as much reduction in the overall seven-year commencement period as possible, to bring the maximum separation between the projects closer together.

### ***Requirement 4***

66. We reiterate our requests:
- to add 'external appearance' to the list at (a) to (h) and
  - to require consultation of the host parishes for the substations, i.e. Newton-with-Clifton and Freckleton.

### ***Requirement 5***

67. We are grateful that the Applicants have converted to using Ordnance Datum heights. However we request that to facilitate local understanding of what the heights mean, some document, e.g. the explanatory memorandum, gives a reference height to an existing landmark in the area.

#### **Requirement 14**

68. We support Fylde Borough Council's position on construction hours.

#### **Requirement 16**

69. We reiterate our request that highway reinstatements are also subject to a time limit for completion. We were told that was 'implicit' but would prefer it to be explicit, either in this requirement or the corresponding construction management plan.

#### **Requirement 26**

70. The comments sent to the Applicants on 8 October on their proposed requirement 26 were as follows:

- we are glad that [the requirement] is no longer without prejudice and that it commits to a 10% minimum gain;
- we do not agree that it should only apply to the permanent works i.e. four of the 54 numbered works, rather than the whole of the order land;
- we think the reference to the plan is unnecessary but we accept the points made by Ms Dunn that the plan could commit to a higher figure;
- instead of listing the hierarchy it could refer to article 37A of the Development Management Procedure Order 2015; and
- if it is to list it in the requirement, then (3)(b) is too vague and should refer instead to securing registered offsite biodiversity units.

#### **Requirement 27**

71. We consider that the bird strike issue is sufficiently important that at least while BAe Systems maintain their objection on this issue if not permanently, it is they rather than the local authority who sign off the Wildlife Hazard Management Plan.

72. This is permissible via section 120(2)(b) of the Planning Act 2008, which provides that '*requirements may in particular include ... requirements to obtain the approval of the Secretary of State or any other person, so far as not within paragraph (a)*' i.e. requirements corresponding to planning conditions.

#### **Outline Communications Plan**

49. We welcome the in-principle commitment that the detailed Communications Plan will cover residents, businesses and the local community. There is reference to other stakeholders; the outline code should explicitly include schools including the three near the substations as well as Town and Parish Councils who cover all of the Fylde.

50. We welcome the in-principle commitment to notify residents in advance of works taking place – the outline code should explicitly include all five groups above i.e. Ballam Road businesses and have a clear timeline of at least 48 hours for notification.
51. We welcome the Equitation Centre Communication Protocol – helpful precedent of the approach to be taken with a range of stakeholders. Expect principle to be included in the outline Code and stakeholders including Town and Parish Councils included in these.
52. We welcome community-based events – these should include a report capturing attendance, points raised and how these will be resolved. These should be held at least monthly in each community.
53. In the preparation of the detailed Communication plan TASC and its members should be consulted.
54. Following the intervention of the Examining Authority we welcome the Applicants' reintroduction of the Local Liaison Committee, whilst expressing some concern that it had been removed by them in the first place.
55. We would want some firming up of arrangements,
- a. Noting that Fylde BC is likely not to exist in 2.5 years' time – and the need for future proof with Parish and Town Councils
  - b. Noting Fylde BC's point about the need for several committees to ensure coverage of the different communities on the route, and
  - c. If there is one Local Liaison Committee that Town and Parish Councils should be invited to send relevant local reps or
  - d. if more than one Local Liaison Committee that Town and Parish Councils could form the basis for Local Liaison Committees if they offered or provide members to ensure communication with our local communities
  - e. Some rigour about the frequency of meetings – monthly – and operation as for other Working Groups.
  - f. Content to include (but not be constrained to)
    - i. Construction Co-ordination Working Groups reports and construction updates as stated by the applicant this morning
    - ii. Consultation event feedback as above
    - iii. and complaints as below
56. We welcome the intention to create a Complaints Management process. This should abide by the 6 Principles of Good Complaint Management (published by the Parliamentary and Health Ombudsman) including the following:
- a. The process should be simple and clear
  - b. Guidance for complainants to seek help or advice
  - c. Responses should be prompt
  - d. There should be a clear escalation route
  - e. Information on making a complaint should be easily available
57. We note the outline Code of Construction commitment to log and record all complaints.
58. Outcomes from all complaints (anonymised) and lessons learned should be shared with the Local Liaison Committees and made public

## Application of NPS – NE1

59. As stated above there is a better route later in the context of critical national priority for low carbon infrastructure.

## Sequencing of works

60. We remain of the view that the works should be run concurrently. We reject the attempt by the applicant to extend the potential gap between starting of the two projects to 7 years 7 months.

61. As stated at the hearing local communities do not want to experience the disruption caused by construction for any longer than necessary. We find it unacceptable that the Applicants think it is necessary to provide proof for something which is self-evident to local communities who will have to experience these works in person for several years.

62. We remain of the view that the works should be run concurrently and if that were not agreed by the Examining Authority then constraints should be placed to ensure that any gap were minimised if not eliminated.

63. This exposes the truth that these are two unconnected projects, run for the benefit of the Applicants and without proper regard to the local communities impacted. There has been much made of 'collaboration between the companies' and 'developing the transmission assets together', leading the public to assume that this was going to be a single development.

64. The Applicants chose – or were forced - to submit a single DCO covering all the Transmission Assets. If they wanted to run sequential projects why not link the Offshore Wind Farm and the relevant Transmission Assets as a single DCO i.e. a DCO for Morgan and a DCO for Morecambe.

65. The above aside, REP5-131 which Liz Dunn claimed provided 'evidence' of a detailed assessment covering how adverse impacts would change if development was concurrent or sequential only considers 10 significant adverse impacts out of a total of 155 impacts makes what appears to be subjective judgements about how they would change in different construction scenarios. Only 7 of the 10 entries are related to the impact on local residents and businesses. In addition, the consideration of any difference in impact of at least two of those entries in different construction scenarios is meaningless. e.g Permanent loss of BMV agricultural land is bound to be unaffected by different construction scenarios – once it is permanently gone it is gone. Similarly the impact of the substations on landscape character will not be affected by the construction duration. Furthermore the document states that all the impacts have been fully assessed in the ES. This document is at best a half hearted attempt to gloss over the negative impacts of this scheme on local communities.

66. REP5-131 refers to AS-070. For the impacts that most affect local communities (Table 1.11 onwards) that document only lists a comparison of immediate sequential construction compared to a 4 year gap. It appears to state that sequential construction results in the longest duration of temporary impacts in the majority of cases but then states that there is no need for further justification of a 4 year gap as the assessment of the impacts has been fully considered in the ES. However, there is no proper comparison of the impacts with concurrent vs sequential construction irrespective of any gap between the projects. Simply stating that the impacts of different scenarios have been assessed does not mean that they are the same.

67. Given the construction will have far-reaching and profound adverse impacts on the community and local businesses including visual character, noise, traffic disruption, air quality, land use etc it is blindingly obvious that the longer that construction goes on the worse the impacts will be. Indeed the applicant accepts in AS-070 that the air quality and noise effects would be reduced by concurrent construction in direct contradiction to assertions made at the recent issue Specific Hearing.

68. The Applicants have repeatedly stated that there will be no road closures (despite the dDCO containing road closure powers). However, that does not translate to no disruption. Partial road closures, temporary traffic lights and banksmen restricting traffic flows will have a very significant detrimental impact on residents trying to get to work and to school. Leisure activities will be negatively impacted in terms of both vehicle movements and use of Public Rights of Way and rural lanes for exercise. Local businesses will be damaged by access restrictions when move goods and materials around the Fylde. The rural lanes and roads in the Fylde area are simply not suitable for the proposed increase in large vehicles and other associated traffic movements associated with this scheme.

### **Equalities provision**

69. We are concerned that the Applicants have not provided an adequate or accredited approach to equalities provision. This should have been done at the beginning of this process, rather than put together at the end (see above for late submission issues).

### **Pink Footed Geese**

70. Over the last few days tens of thousands of pink footed geese have descended onto fields adjoining the route and substations. We attach videos showing these. The numbers have been so great that an article appeared on BBC North West News showing the 36,000 geese that arrived at Martin Mere Reserve, just south of the Ribble, over this last weekend. It is these birds that come to the fields north of the Ribble to forage in the local fields where the substations would be sited.

71. The link below accesses the BBC report with pictures. We have other photos and videos of the geese along the cabling route and adjacent to the substation sites; a video has been submitted separately for Deadline 6.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/lancashire/hi/people\\_and\\_places/nature/newsid\\_9113000/9113763.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/lancashire/hi/people_and_places/nature/newsid_9113000/9113763.stm)

### **Morecambe financial viability**

72. Given that the joint nature of this application does not extend to either covering each other's projects in the event of ceasing to exist or being able to fund the works we find the financial evidence provided by Morecambe to be wholly inadequate and showing the potential for stopping work part way through. There should be a letter of support covering the full costs of the works from the host owner.



## Figures





## Annex A – correspondence from the Civil Aviation Authority

Thank you for contacting us.

The following text is taken from our website (see [Lighting and marking of obstacles](#))

- Safeguarding zones/assessments of potential obstacles relating to UK civil licensed aerodromes may extend out to distances greater than 15 kilometres from the runway thresholds. Various factors (including runway lengths/configurations and the types of operation) influence the dimensions of each aerodrome's safeguarding zones.
- If the structure constitutes an 'aerodrome obstacle', it is the aerodrome licence holder/operator that will assess the potential lighting and marking requirement. Please refer to Chapter 4 (The assessment and treatment of obstacles) of [CAP 168: Licensing of Aerodromes](#) for further details. [Civil Aviation Authority \(CAA\) Airspace Regulation](#) can provide details of the safeguarding points of contact at individual aerodromes.

In short, it is the responsibility of Warton and Blackpool airports to engage with the developers to determine the lighting requirement of the masts.

We hope this helps, but please let us know if you have any further questions.

Regards

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External Information Services  
Civil Aviation Authority  
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## **Annex B – Construction Accesses**

*I am Susan Ashton , vice-chair of Westby-with-Plumpton PC.*

*I am here to remind everyone that the cable laying could affect businesses, especially those reliant on Ballam Road. Before the public consultation enquiry earlier in the summer, I had canvassed the businesses on Ballam Road, West Moss Lane, and Peel Road. They rely on good road connections, remembering that Ballam Road links Lytham to Peel Road and the M55.*

*There has been no communication between the applicant and any of these small businesses. Nothing has been done to allay fears that Ballam Road will have closures or restricted vehicle movements. I was assured that the road would not be closed, but there has been nothing said about how long the work will take or how it will affect other traffic.*

*I have concentrated my efforts on Ballam Road and Peel Road, but I am sure there are concerns about the other roads which lie in the path of the proposed cable route. As at the previous consultation, we are left with questions still unanswered.*

*How long is it expected that the Ballam Road area will be inconvenienced by the necessary land excavation?*

*Westby residents and businesspeople want to know what is happening.*

**Since the hearings Sue has also revisited many of the businesses on Ballam Road and peel Road.**

*The businesses on Coppice Farm West Moss Lane, most businesses expressed a concern about Ballam Road and accessibility to/from Lytham.*

- *Wag Nanny [ relies on people being able to leave their dogs, as this is a dog day nursery, also selling animal feed. Run by a young woman and her partner. Not taking a wage yet!! Very concerned]*
- *Silent Mill, beer brewing. [Small family run business. All beer goes into Lytham or to Pemberton's, on Ballam Road. Very concerned]*
- *Tony's Body work and car valeting [Obviously the customers need to be able to get their cars to the business. Tony is very knowledgeable about M. and M. proposed plans and doesn't trust them]*
- *Clockworks, repairing antique clocks [ a new business, not too sure that any disruption to Ballam Road would affect his business.*
- *ACE Media [ new to the Coppice Farm Business Park] a business relying on online sales Would worry if postman couldn't get to lock-up!!*
- *There is a man using a lock up to store a car, his hobby. He wasn't particularly worried though was concerned that Ballam Road could be seriously affected by as he uses the road many times a week!!*
- *WMG [selling toys online, needs good road communication for deliveries etc.]*

- *The Coppice Farm Business Park is very new. It is beautifully laid-out, about 40 units, plenty of parking, all concreted. The owners keen to get all units tenanted, don't need people put off by uncertainty of what might happen to Ballam Road.*

#### *Peel Road*

- *Ridgeway Farm [farm visits. Has online bookings but relies on passing "trade".]*
- *Lowlands Farm [Alpaca Farm, open to public, mostly pre-booked visits, but need good road links for visitors to access farm]*
- *Peel Hall Business Park [many companies using the site, all small family businesses, all relying on good links Lytham/Motorway. In other words, if the traffic on Ballam Road is disrupted, some of the companies may move onto other business parks!!]*
- *Clifton Estate, [family run caravan park. Won't be mega affected by any disruption to Ballam Road as most visitors arrive from Whitehill Road end of Peel Road.]*

#### *Ballam Road*

- *Pemberton's Dairy [Farm shop, dairy, deliveries etc. Very concerned but Andrew Pemberton thinks that a road, as important as Ballam Road cannot be closed. Any diversion will be a long ride round!!!]*

*I have not re-canvassed Westby Hall or Lawns Farm, but I am sure that both owners, The Taylors and the Laycocks, still have the same concerns as when I first visited them.*

*All the people I spoke to were grateful for all the work TASC have done, and to me for keeping them informed.*

*I called on some of the residents on West Moss Lane. Most of the people I spoke to had very little idea of what is going to happen if the application is granted. Basically they "have been kept in the dark". They have received little, if nothing from M. and M. and, until I told them, little concept of just how big the project is. They live a field away!*

*There is a definite lack of clarity, honesty and openness from Morgan and Morecambe*

## **Annex C – Blackpool Road Recreation Ground**

*Cllr Joanne Gardner, Councillor for Kilnhouse Ward*

*The TASC group acknowledge that the applicants have made changes to their original proposals at Blackpool North Playing Fields.*

*However we feel that this does not go far enough to fully protect football for children in St Annes. Too many unknown questions remain, particularly around start and finish times due to the dual nature of this project. What is temporary and what is permanent?*

*We do not accept this can be achieved within the 5 month period as indicated the applicants. How long will the children be without football? And where will they go? There are no other suitable facilities in St Annes. So how far will they have to travel? We feel this could close a football club that has been in existence for over 50 years.*

*We maintain that the impact on children's health and well being will be put at risk due to the flawed route of this project.*

## **Annex D – Freckleton Road Bridleway (Bridleway 16)**

Councillor Keith McKay, Freckleton Parish Council.

*I wish to raise concerns about bridleway 16. It's already been used for access for the for the investigation purposes and drilling survey. As a result of that, the surface has been churned up significantly. I suspect that this bridleway will not survive the development works that have been proposed and I suspect we will probably lose this bridleway permanently.*

*It certainly won't be usable by equines.*

*To explain this last statement further, to date, the works carried out have been fairly minor, but with recent rains, the surface has suffered with the additional vehicles that have passed over it.*

*For your further information, there is a planning application in place (Fylde BC Planning Application Reference 24/0541) and currently under consideration for the Bluefield Solar Farm which intends to make use of Eeka Lane, which forms the start of the Bridleway, as part of their main access for construction. The track was never intended for such a purpose.*

*In respect of the current application, the bridleway has to be moved to allow construction of the substation that will be immediately adjacent when completed. Given the comments already presented regarding the behaviour of equines and other farm animals, the noise from the substation is likely to be beyond their tolerable threshold.*

*For this reason, regardless of whatever remedial work is put in place, the Bridleway is likely to be unusable by these creatures.*

*Combined with what has been seen to date, the expectation is that the bridleway will be permanently lost for its intended use.*

Councillor Noreen Griffiths, Freckleton Parish & Fylde Borough Council

*Regarding the Freckleton the bridle way, since they started to do the boreholes and trial pits, the whole top surface of the bridleway has been taken off.*

*We have photographs of a machine in a ditch since the weather at the weekend, which are included here.*

*The first shows the Bridleway before work started, the second shows the machine that utilised the Bridleway for its access and the last the state that was found after the work was completed.*

*It is impossible to walk down it. It's completely waterlogged and also the habitats that were down there have been ruined. So can I ask who will be responsible for putting the Bridleway back? At the moment it is unusable and winter has not yet arrived!*

*Thank you.*

## **Annex E – outstanding agricultural land use and farming matters**

Councillor Keith McKay for the Parish Councils.

*As an integration engineer of some standing for a long time, one of the things that becomes very clear from the discussion on the construction techniques for the two projects is that they are going to need extremely tight configuration management control on both the design and the subsequent build to ensure that they are capable of actually building the second project without interfering with the first one.*

*Obviously, what will actually get built would be slightly different from the design, for all sorts of various practical reasons, as usually occurs when dealing with installations where the design is being installed into an inadequately defined environment which cannot be determined in enough detail in advance.*

*So there is a problem that they are going to have to overcome with that, which requires very detail records of what was built.*

*When the second project comes along, the existence of the first will then influence the second, in terms of both the detail design and the access available to actually build the second, which may have changed from that intended originally.*

*This seems to be heart of the concern articulated by Louise Staples from the NFU earlier in the hearing.*

*This situation makes one reflect upon is that the proposed construction technique, of using factory built components, which is undoubtedly very cost effective and appropriate for cityscapes or where the routes are fundamentally geometrically similar around block plans. However, it doesn't seem to quite fit in a traditional English countryside where the fields are smaller, of random shape and size and not always very level. It lacks the required flexibility to make the system more compatible with needs of the land owners or users.*

*One wonders about the appropriateness of the methods that are proposed for these circumstances.*

*It does give rise to a question for the Applicants to consider.*

*Is this the root cause of the need for the time between the projects construction, as perhaps the second one cannot be designed properly until the first is actually constructed?*

*Thank you.*

*Also, on the question of land restoration, what is the impact of the buried cable operating temperature. Oersted suggested it was 90 degrees C. If they go deeper than 1.2m, then it gets hotter as it cannot dissipate the heat, hence they have to reduce the power. I know farmers will know how long land takes to recover from trenching - even I have seen it here at my home - it can be years to settle and get back to normal use*

*At ISH4 the examiners asked a local farmer to quantify how long it would take for land to be usable for farming activities. Local farmers have stated on many occasions that for land that has been subjected to such significant disturbance, the time to fully recover will be measured in decades not years.*